

TALES FROM THE UPANISHADS

The word Upanishad literally means 'sit down near' for the student had to sit close to the teacher to receive instructions. Perhaps, what brought the two still closer were the stories the Guru narrated. These stories provided a meaningful context for the topics under discussion. They also demonstrate that in those days knowledge was not the monopoly of any select group. Thus Janashruti, the ruler of the land, approaches the cart driver Raikva, with humility, to seek the highest truth.

OTHER ACK EPICS & MYTHOLOGY:

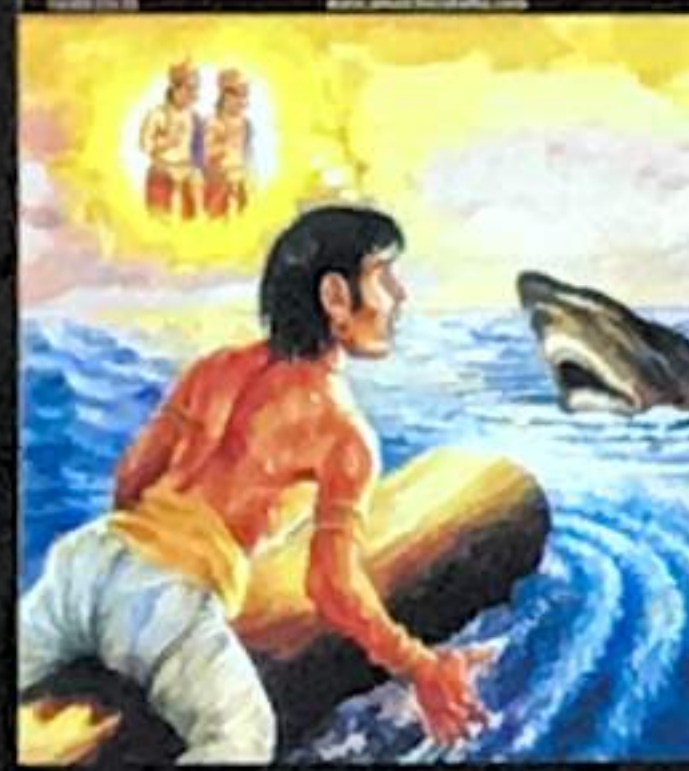
NACHIKETA



THE GITA



ASHWINI KUMARS

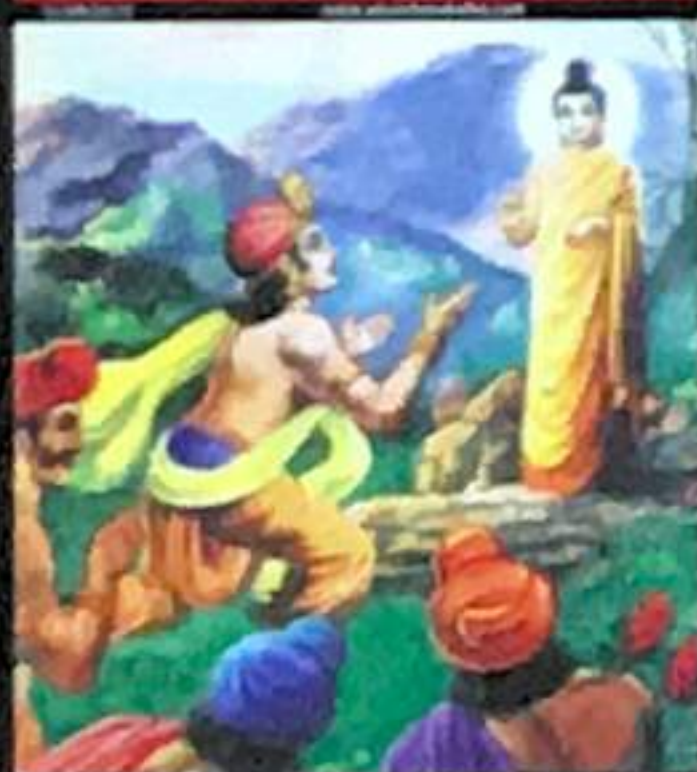


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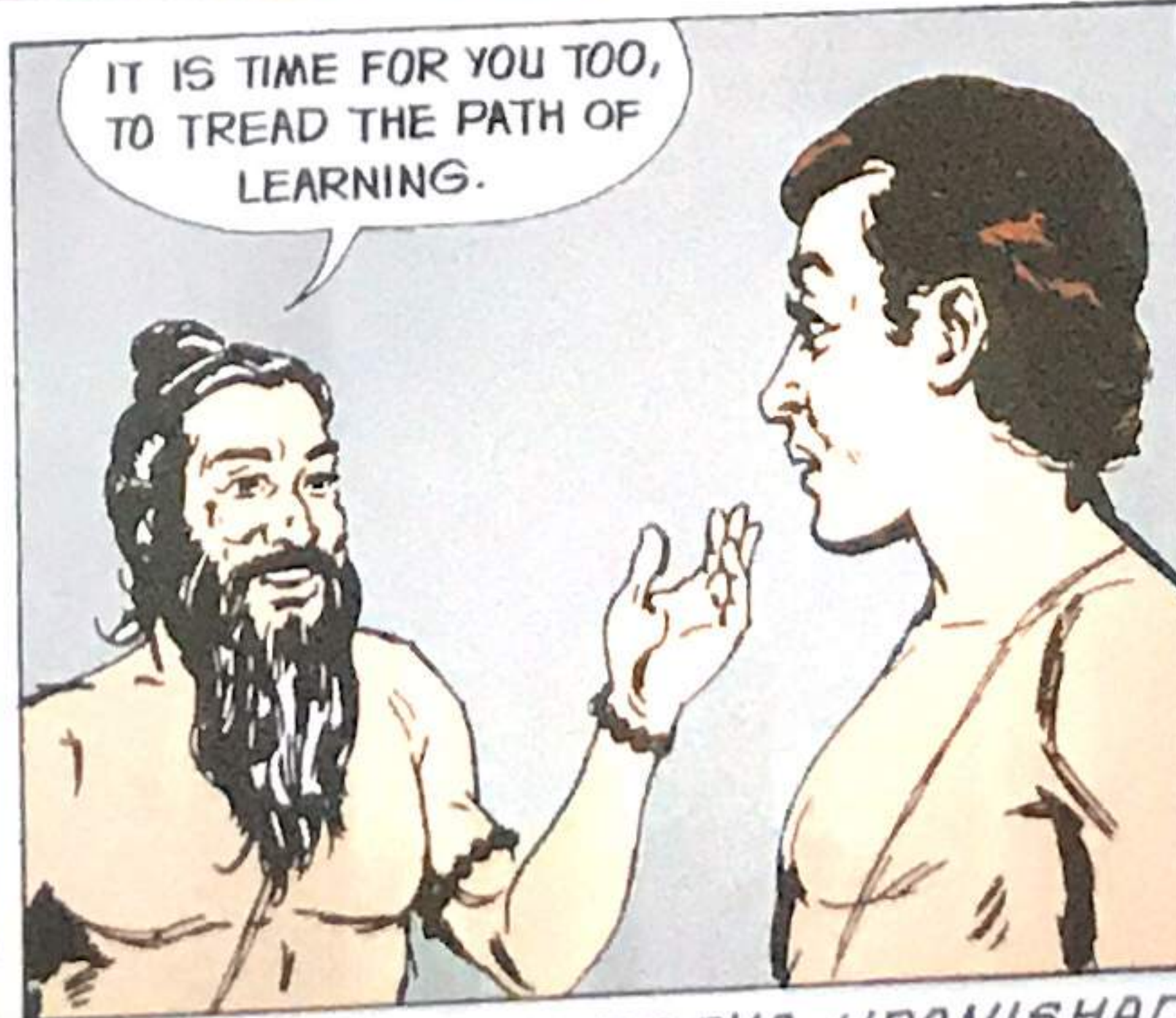
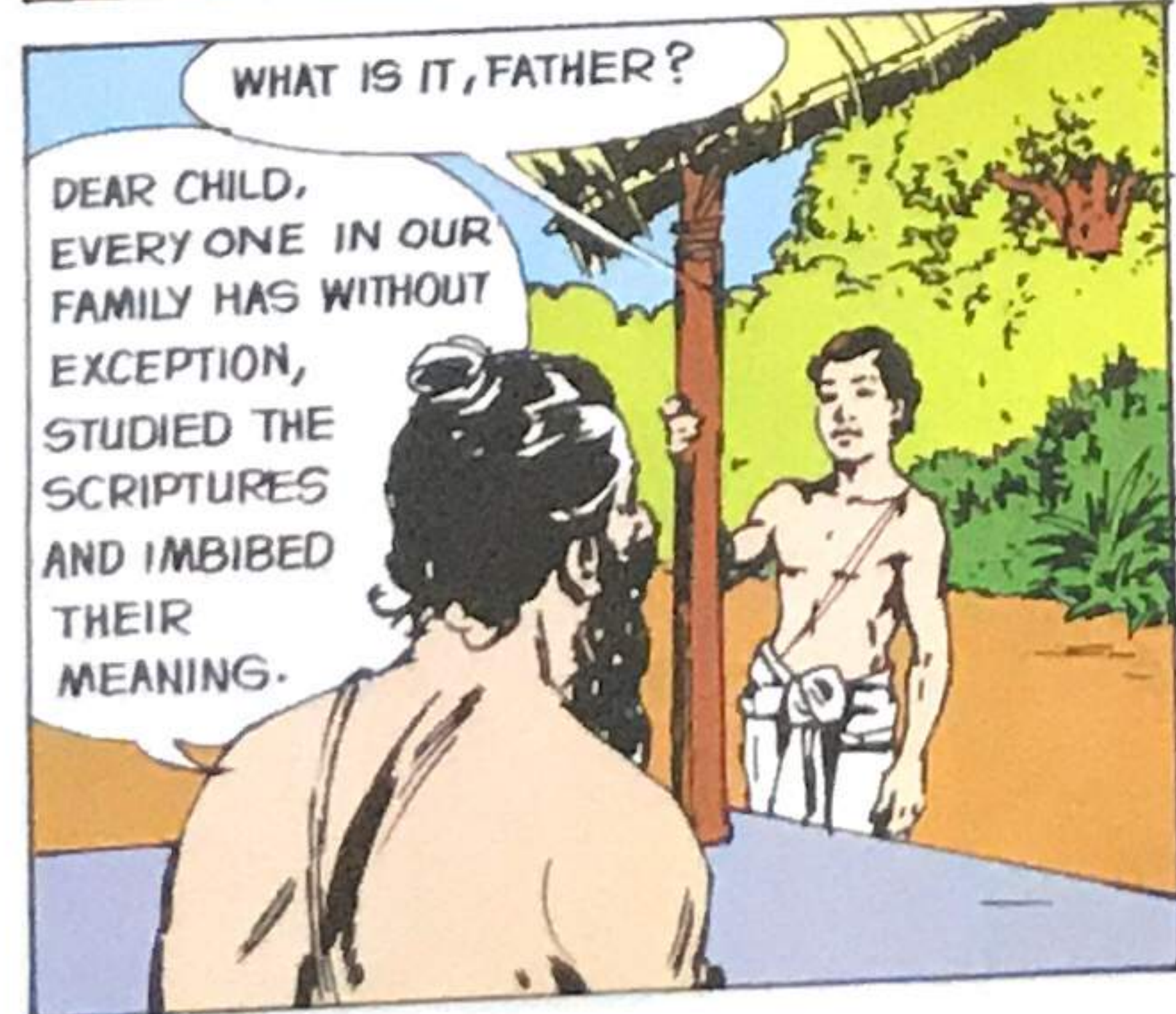
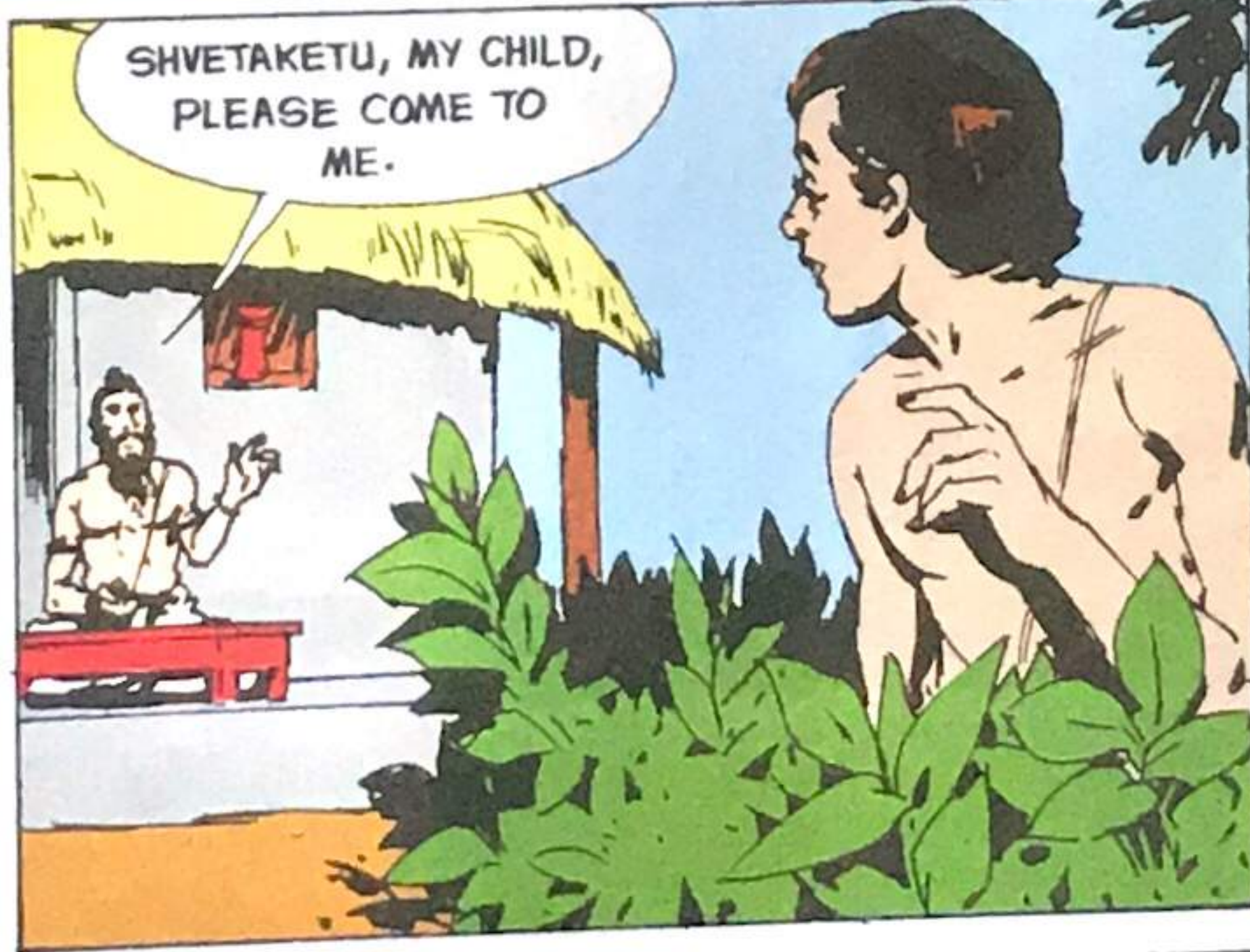
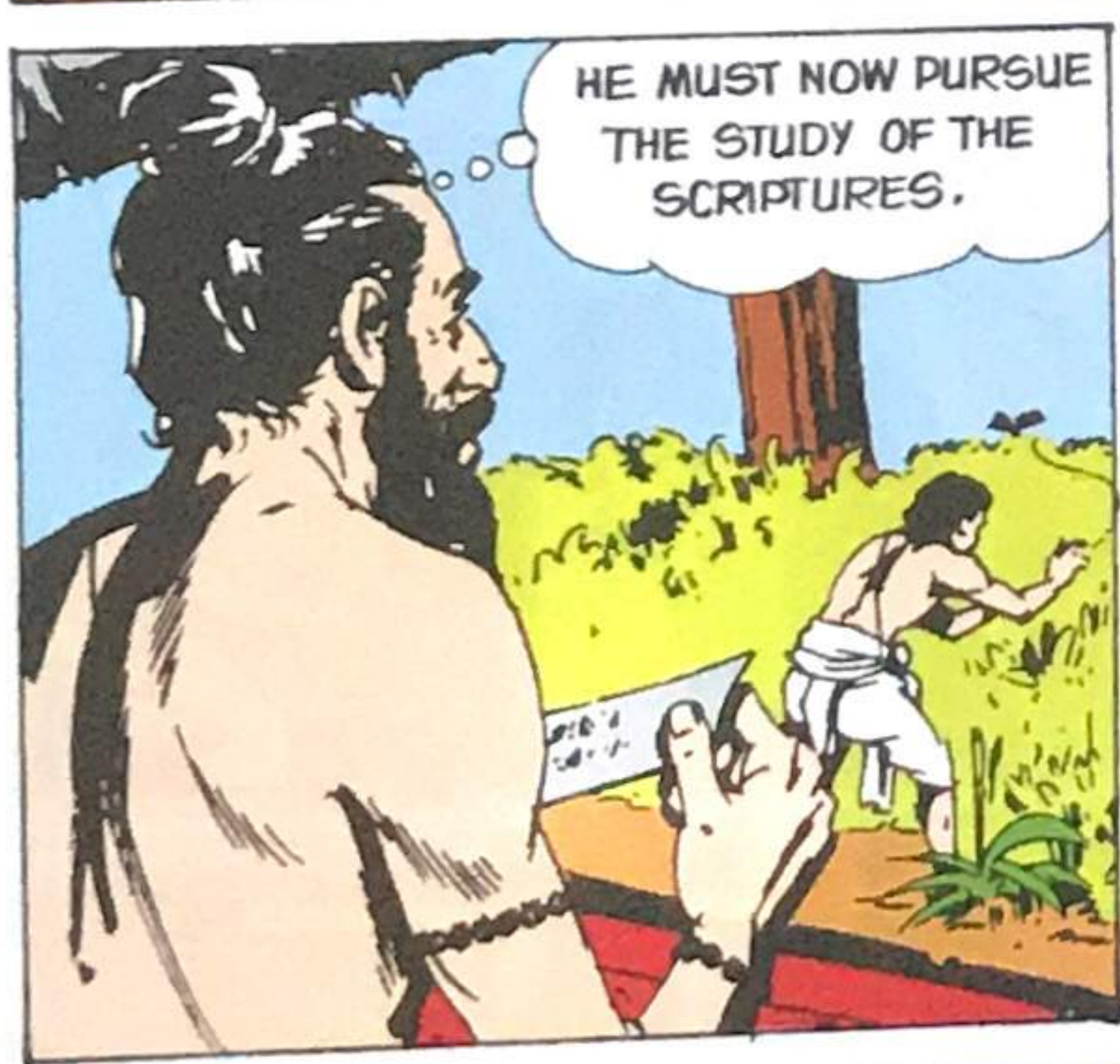
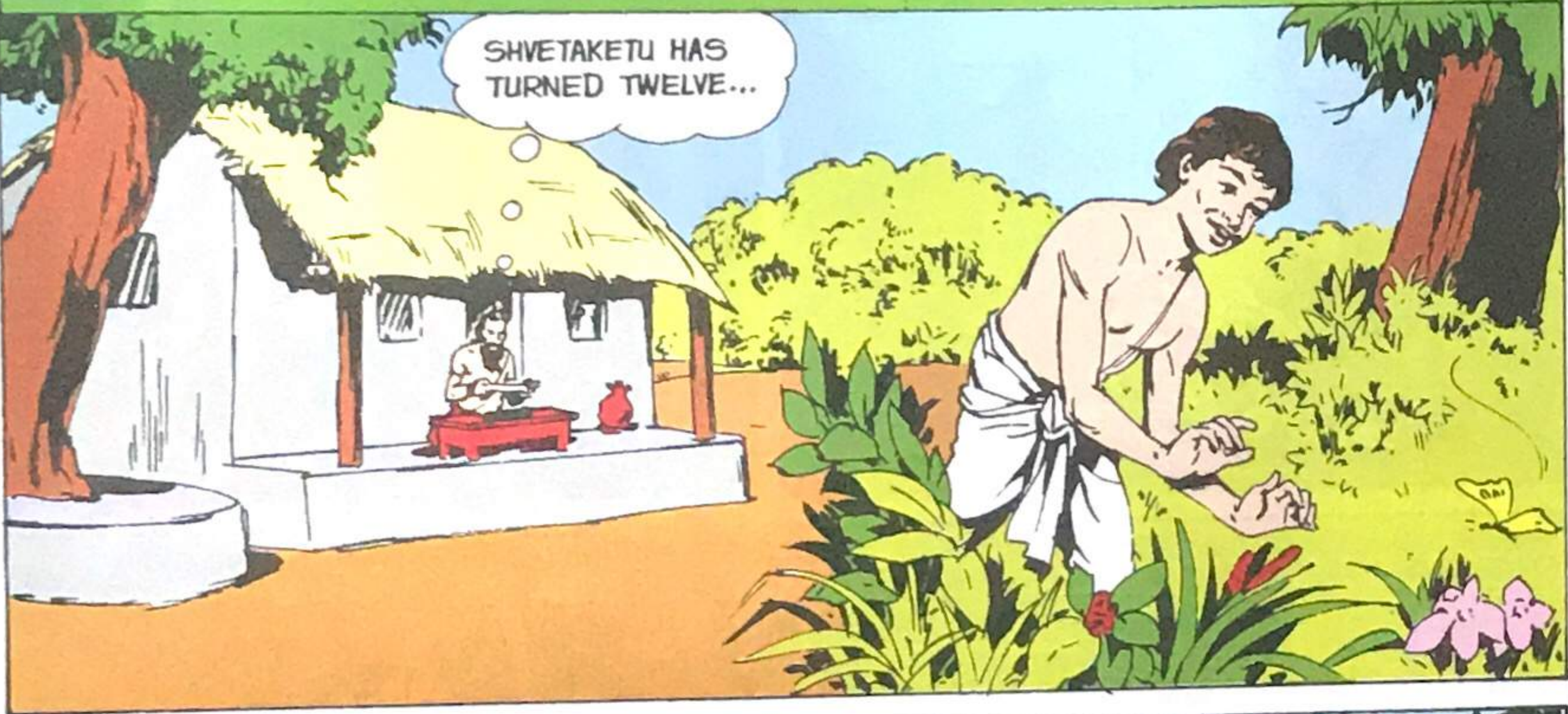
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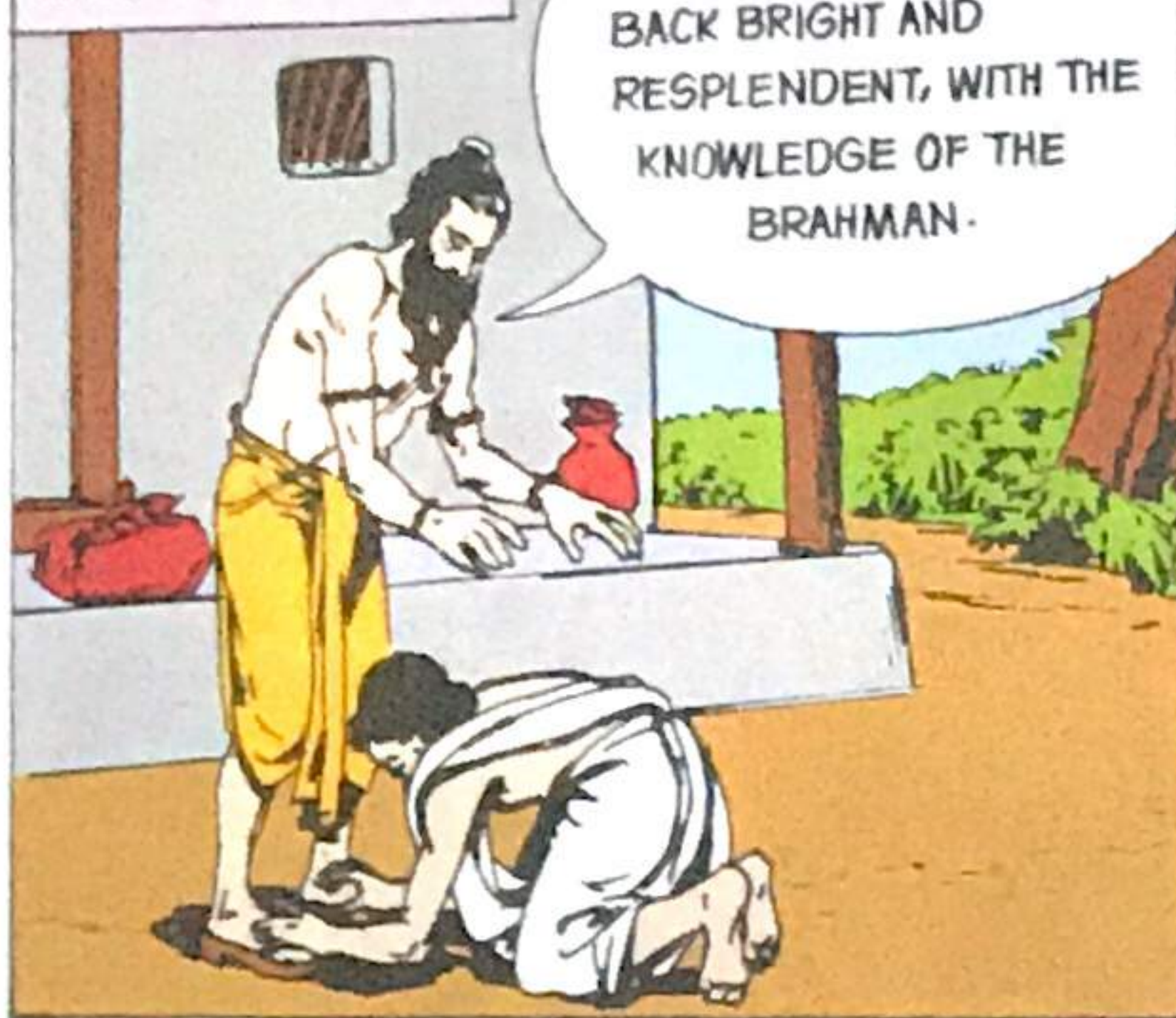
SHVETAKETU*

IN A HERMITAGE DEEP IN THE FOREST LIVED THE LEARNED SAGE, UDDALAKA ARUNI, WITH HIS SON, SHVETAKETU.

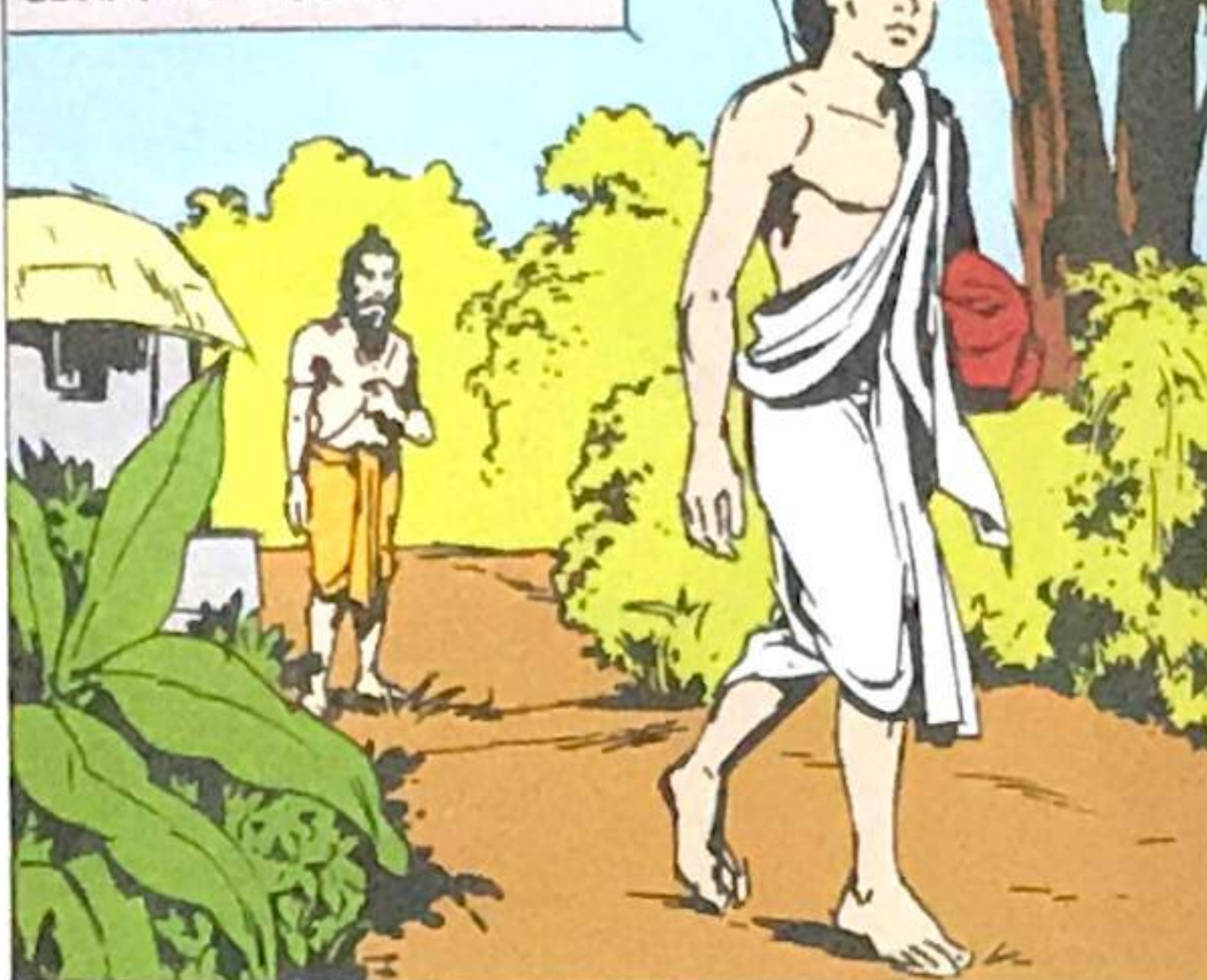


SOON AFTERWARDS—

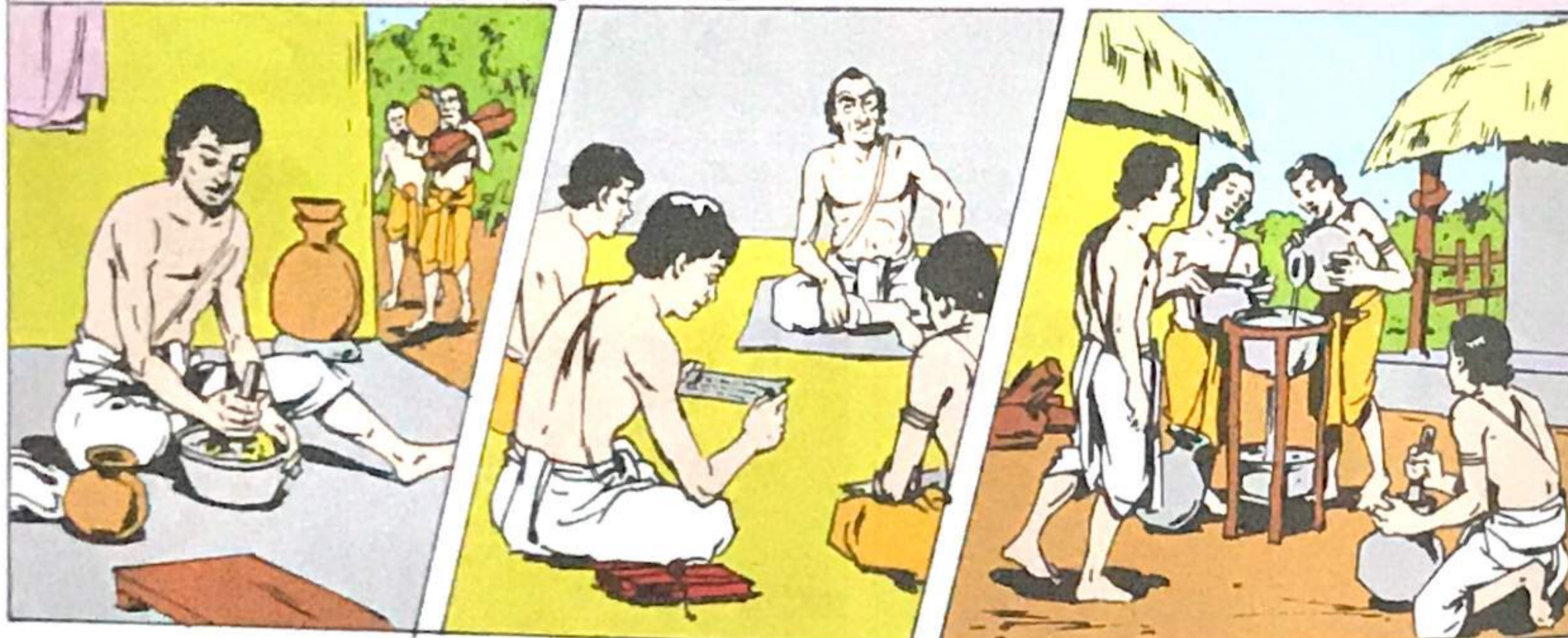
GO FORTH SON, AND COME BACK BRIGHT AND RESPLENDENT, WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE BRAHMAN.



SHVETAKETU LEFT HIS FATHER'S HERMITAGE TO STUDY UNDER ANOTHER LEARNED RISHI.

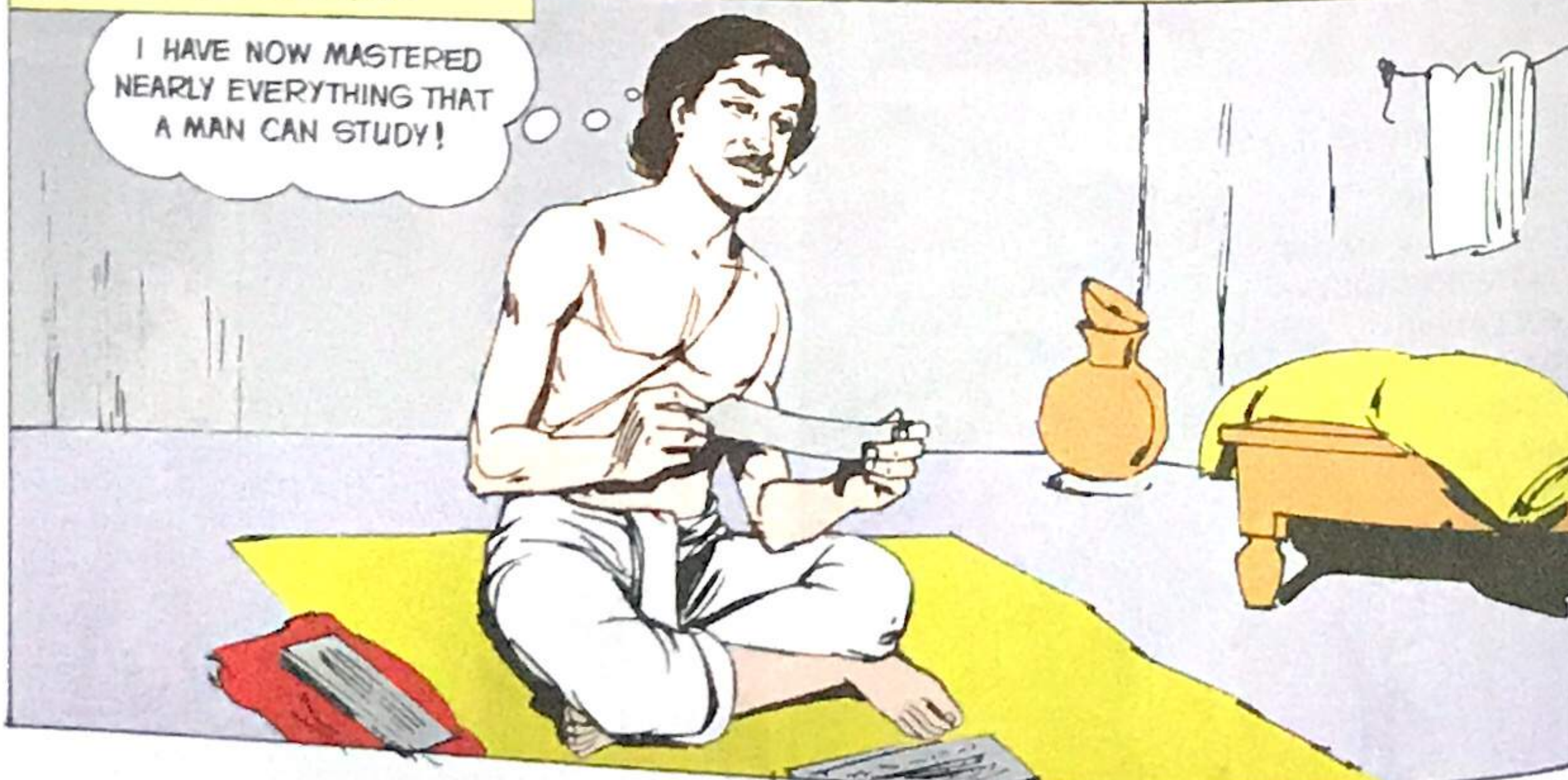


UNDER HIS ABLE GURU, SHVETAKETU READ THE SCRIPTURES AND LEARNT THE SCIENCES; STUDIED PHILOSOPHY AND MASTERED THE ARTS.



AT THE END OF TWELVE LONG YEARS, SHVETAKETU HAD LEARNT ALL THAT THERE WAS TO LEARN—AT LEAST, SO HE THOUGHT.

I HAVE NOW MASTERED NEARLY EVERYTHING THAT A MAN CAN STUDY!

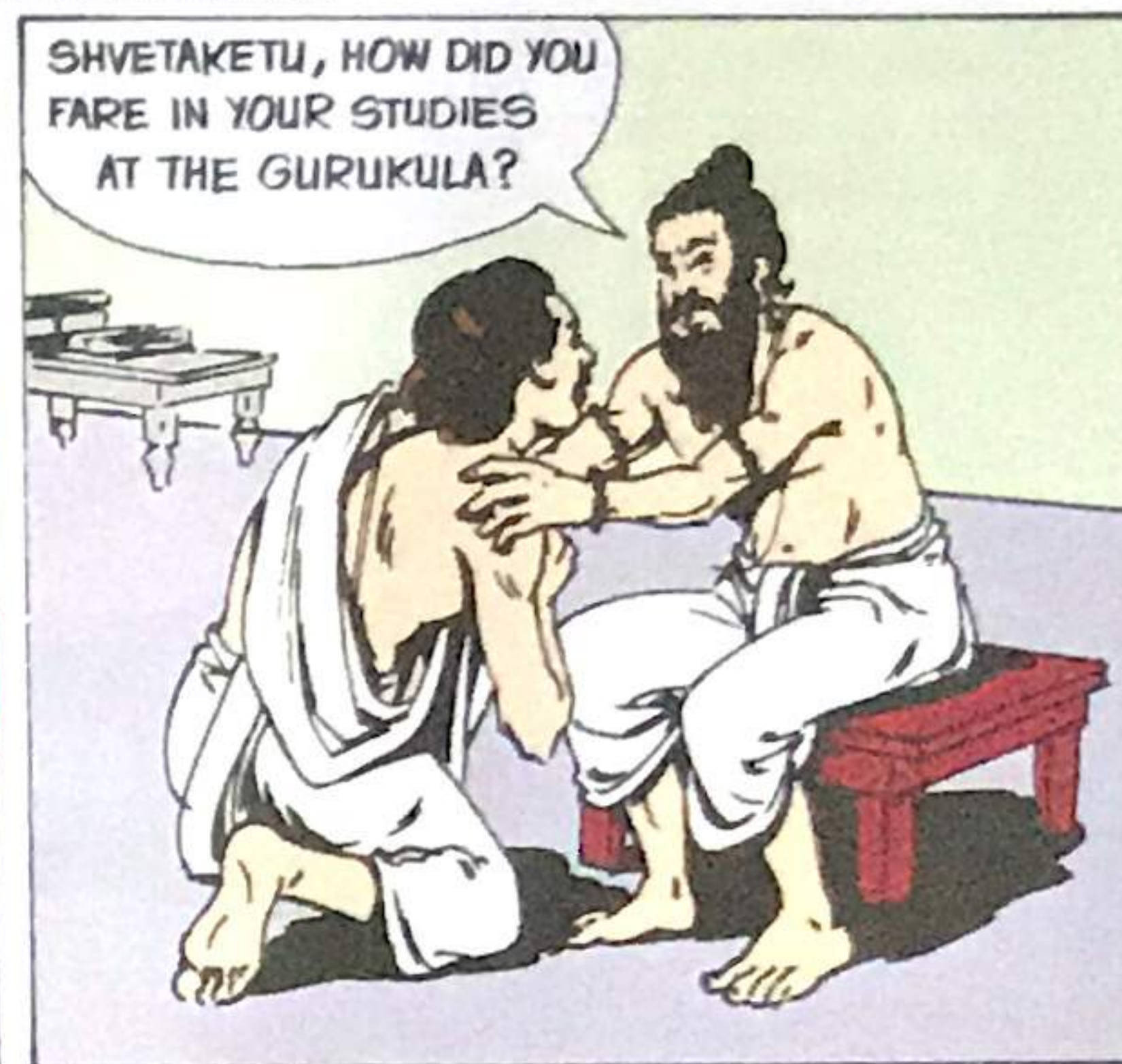


PRANAM* FATHER!

O, SHVETAKETU, HOW YOU HAVE GROWN!

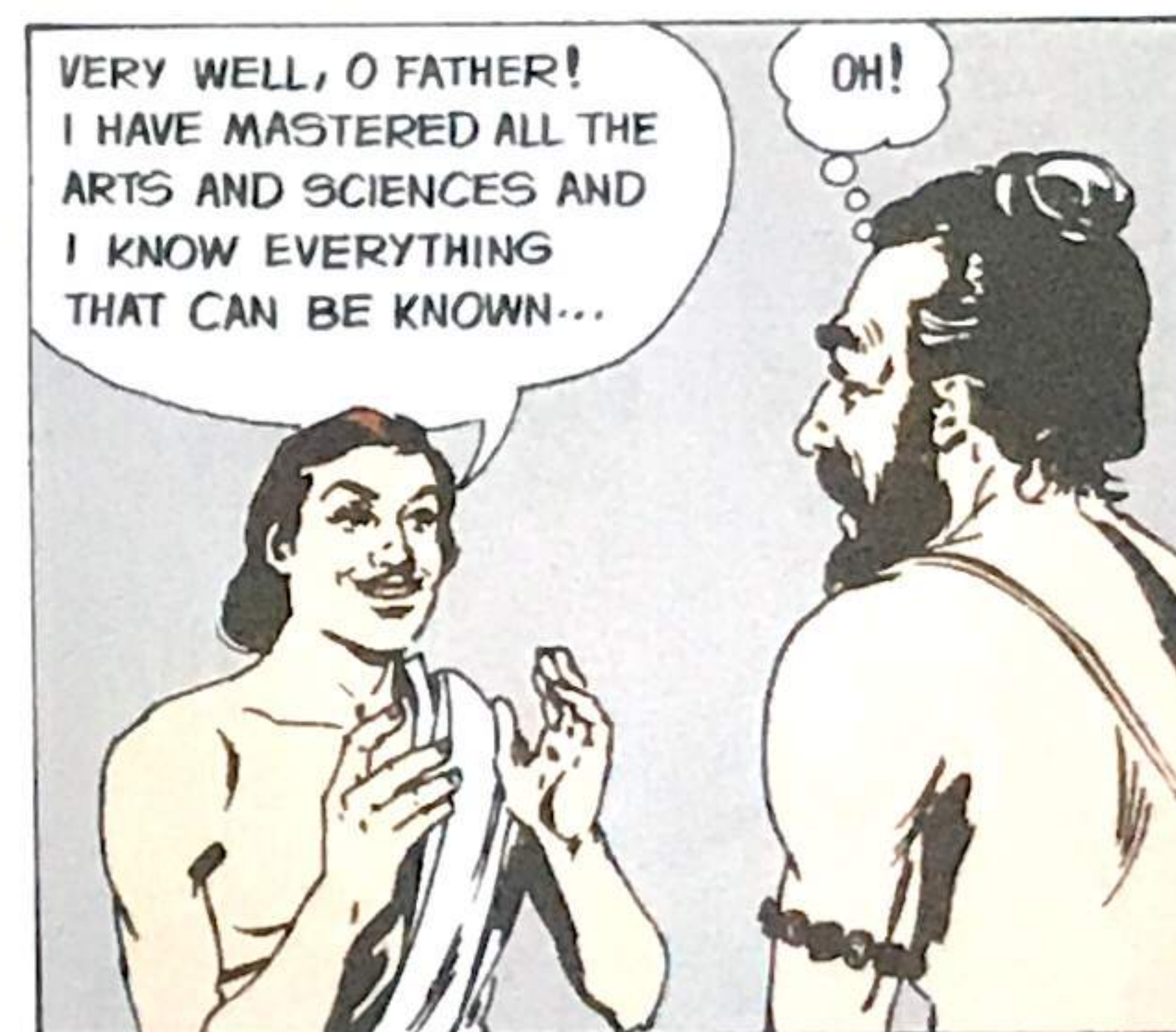


SHVETAKETU, HOW DID YOU FARE IN YOUR STUDIES AT THE GURUKULA?

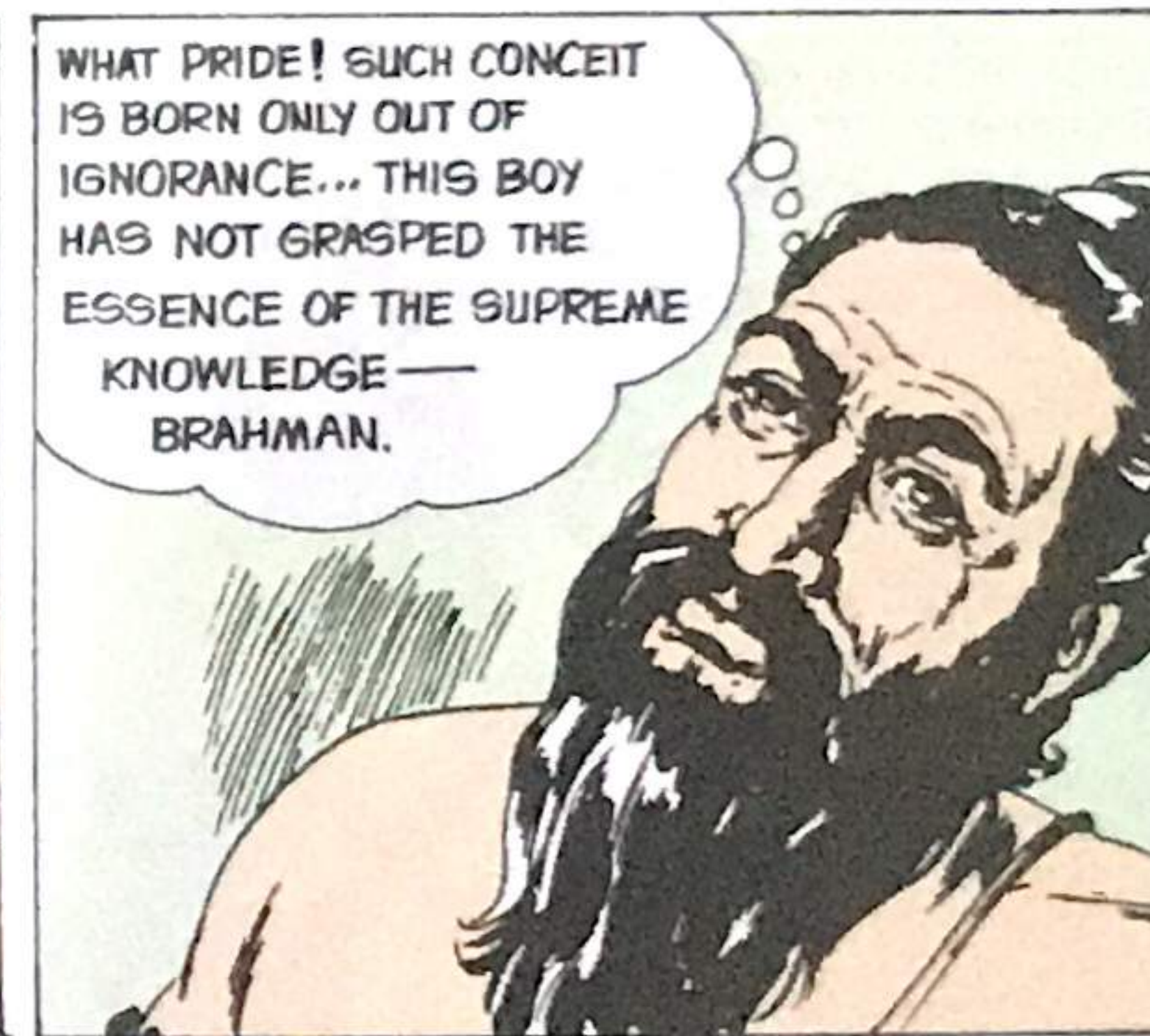


VERY WELL, O FATHER! I HAVE MASTERED ALL THE ARTS AND SCIENCES AND I KNOW EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE KNOWN...

OH!



WHAT PRIDE! SUCH CONCEIT IS BORN ONLY OUT OF IGNORANCE... THIS BOY HAS NOT GRASPED THE ESSENCE OF THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE — BRAHMAN.



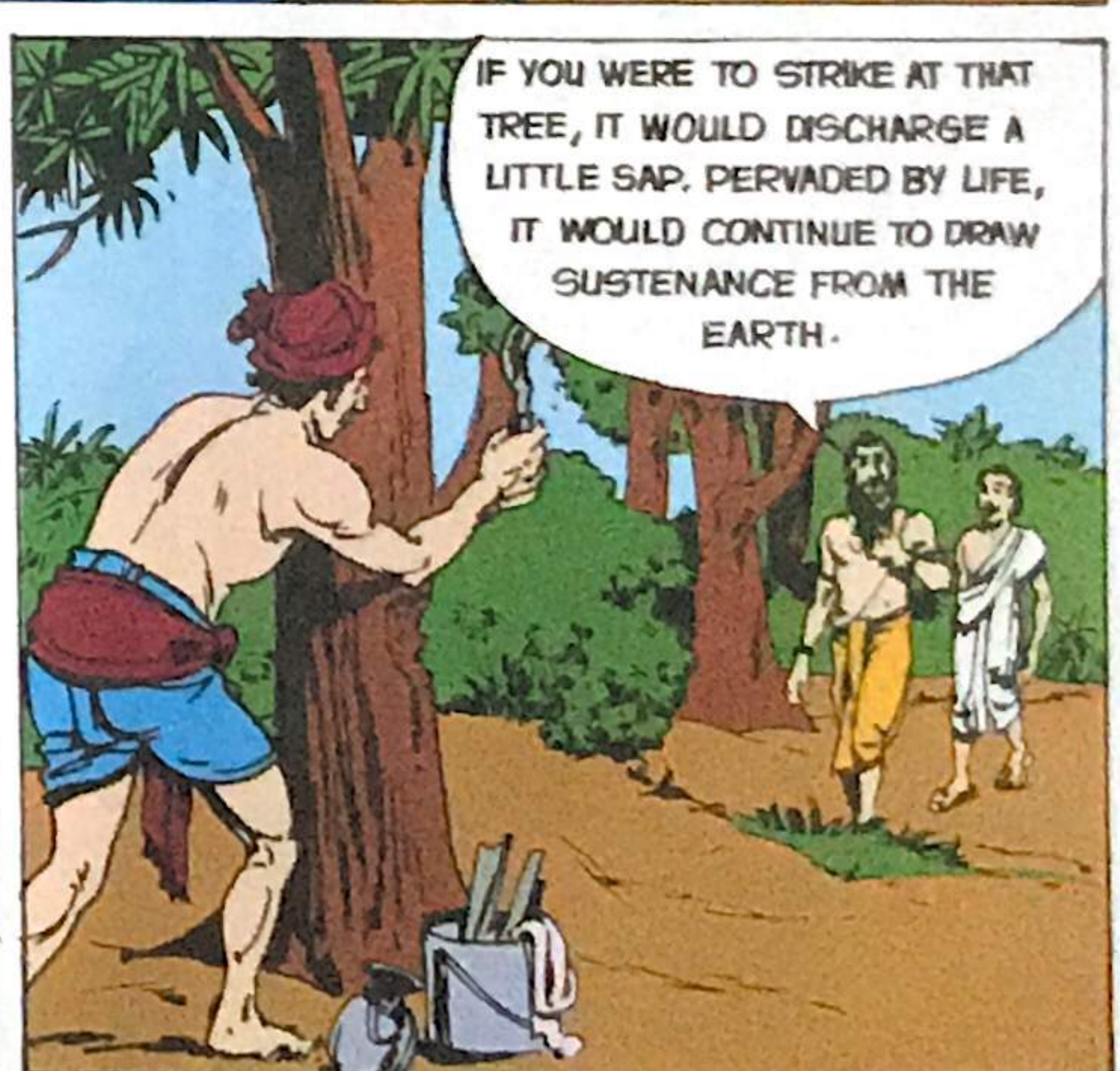
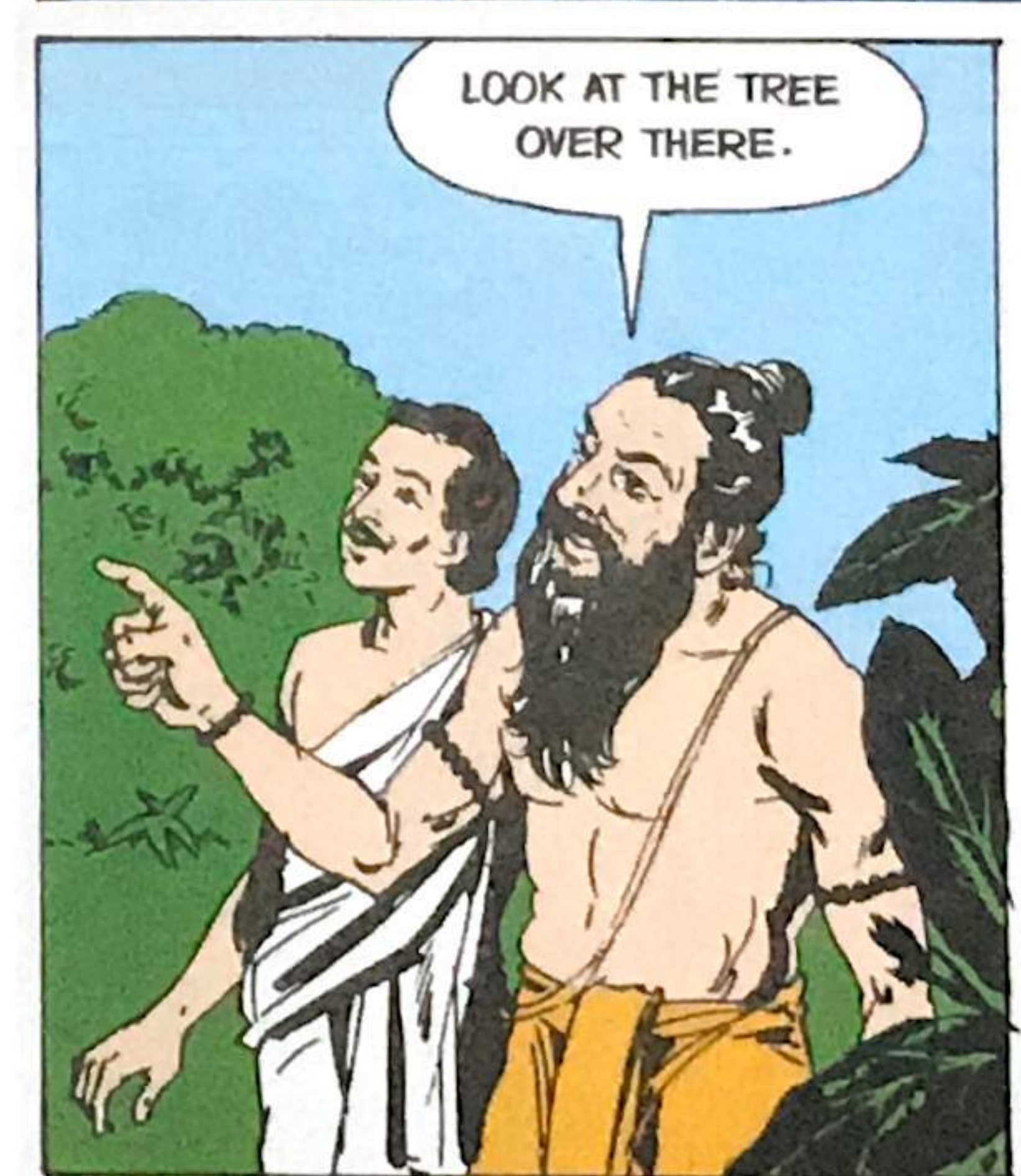
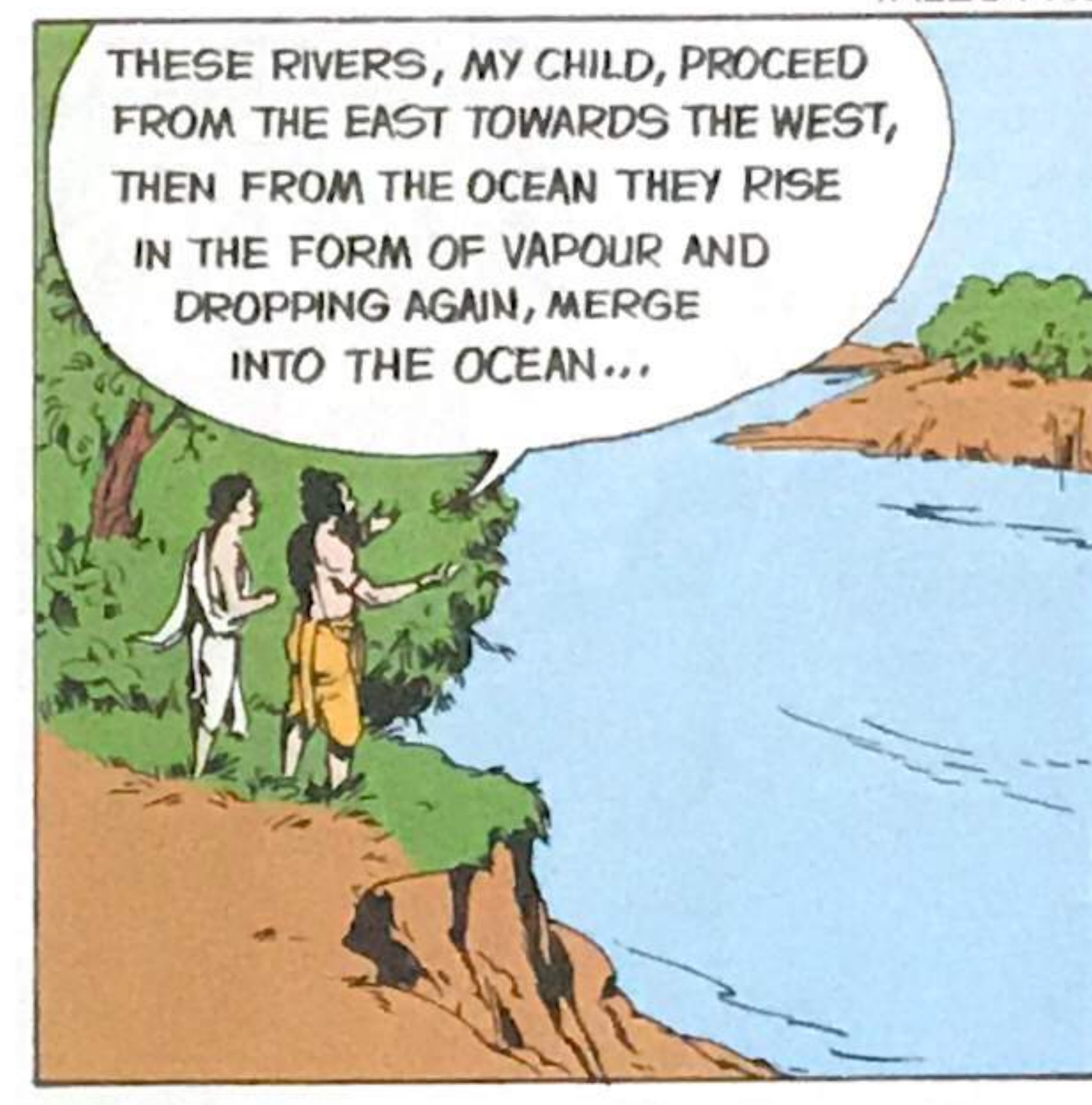
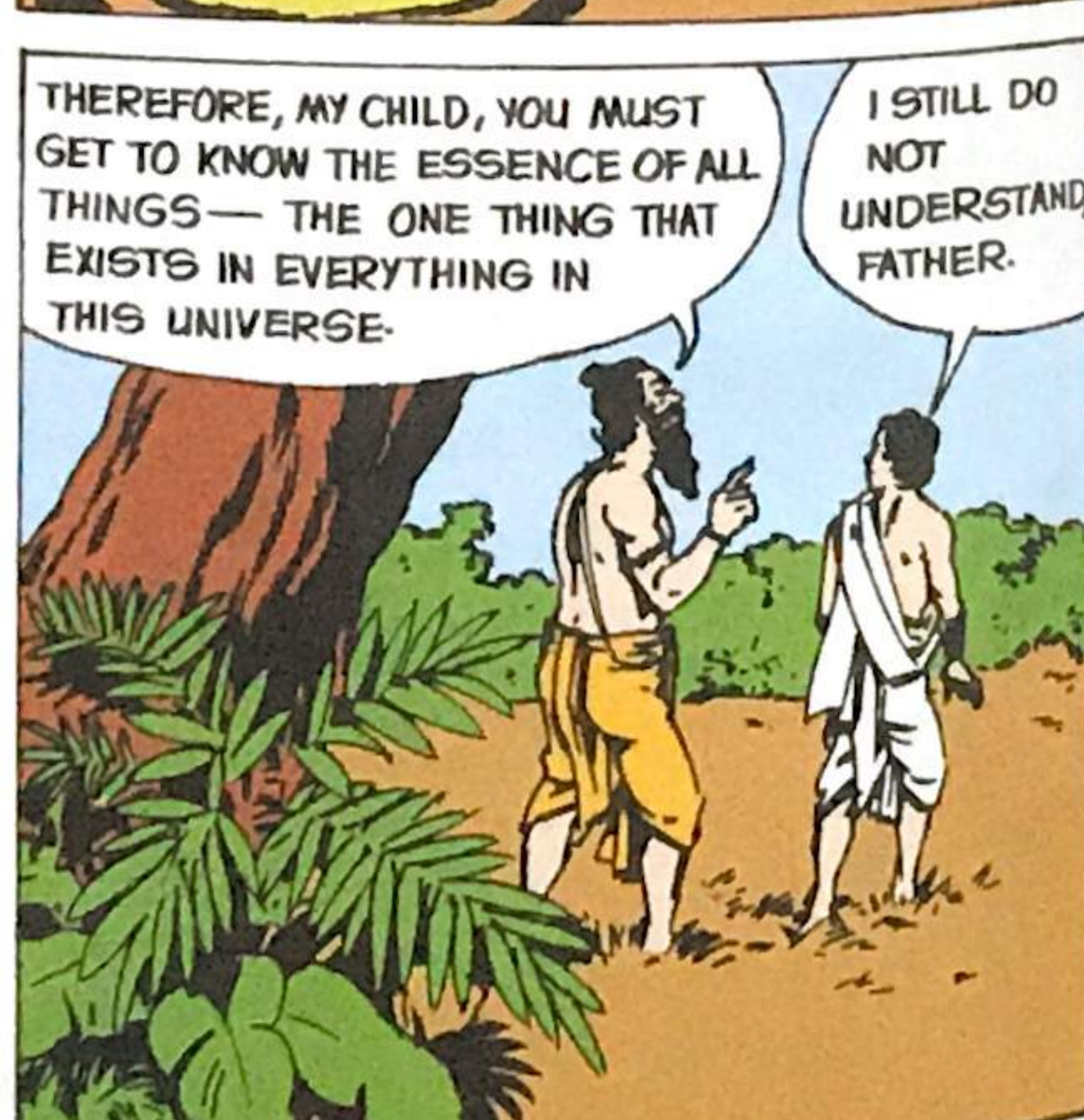
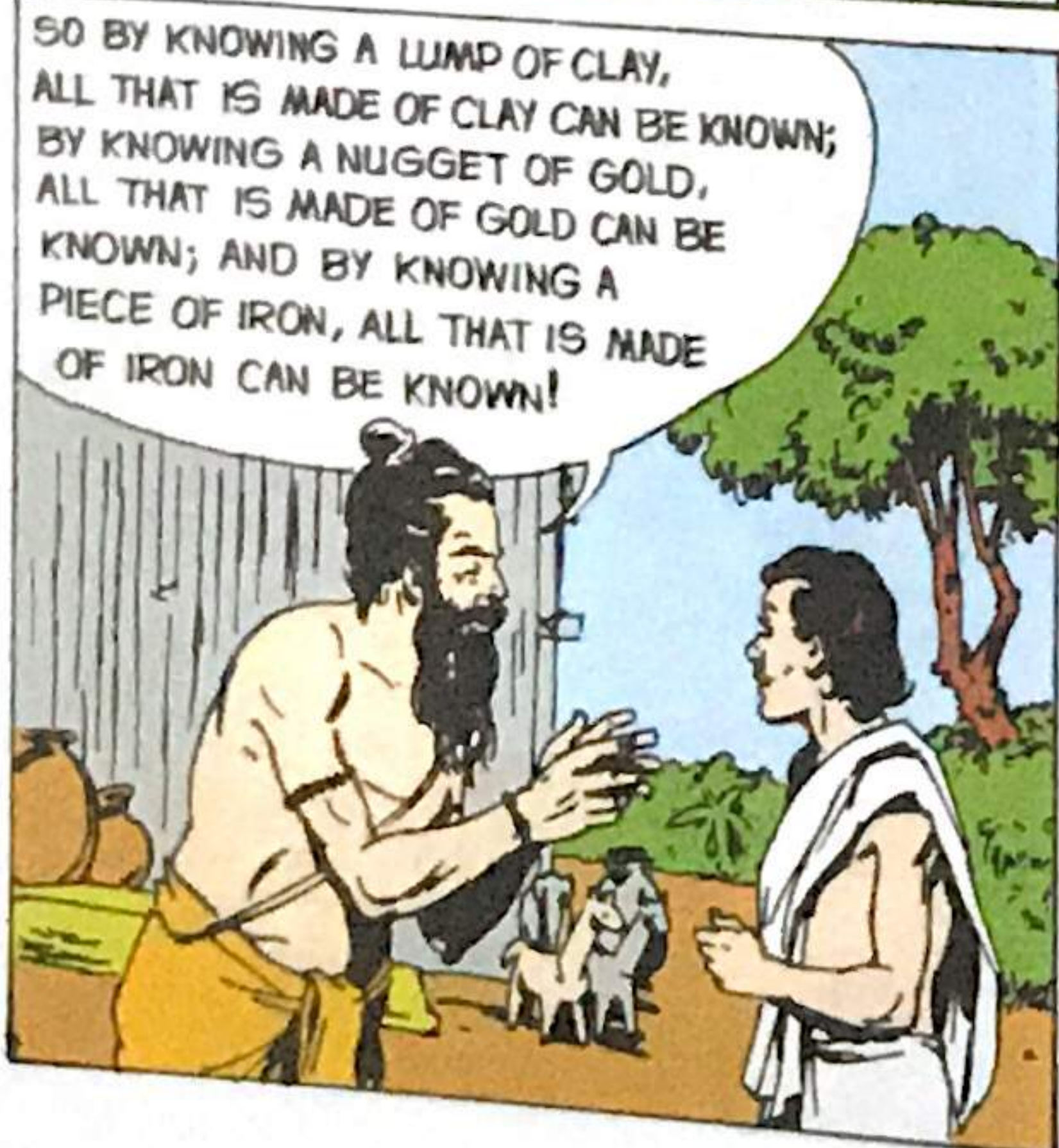
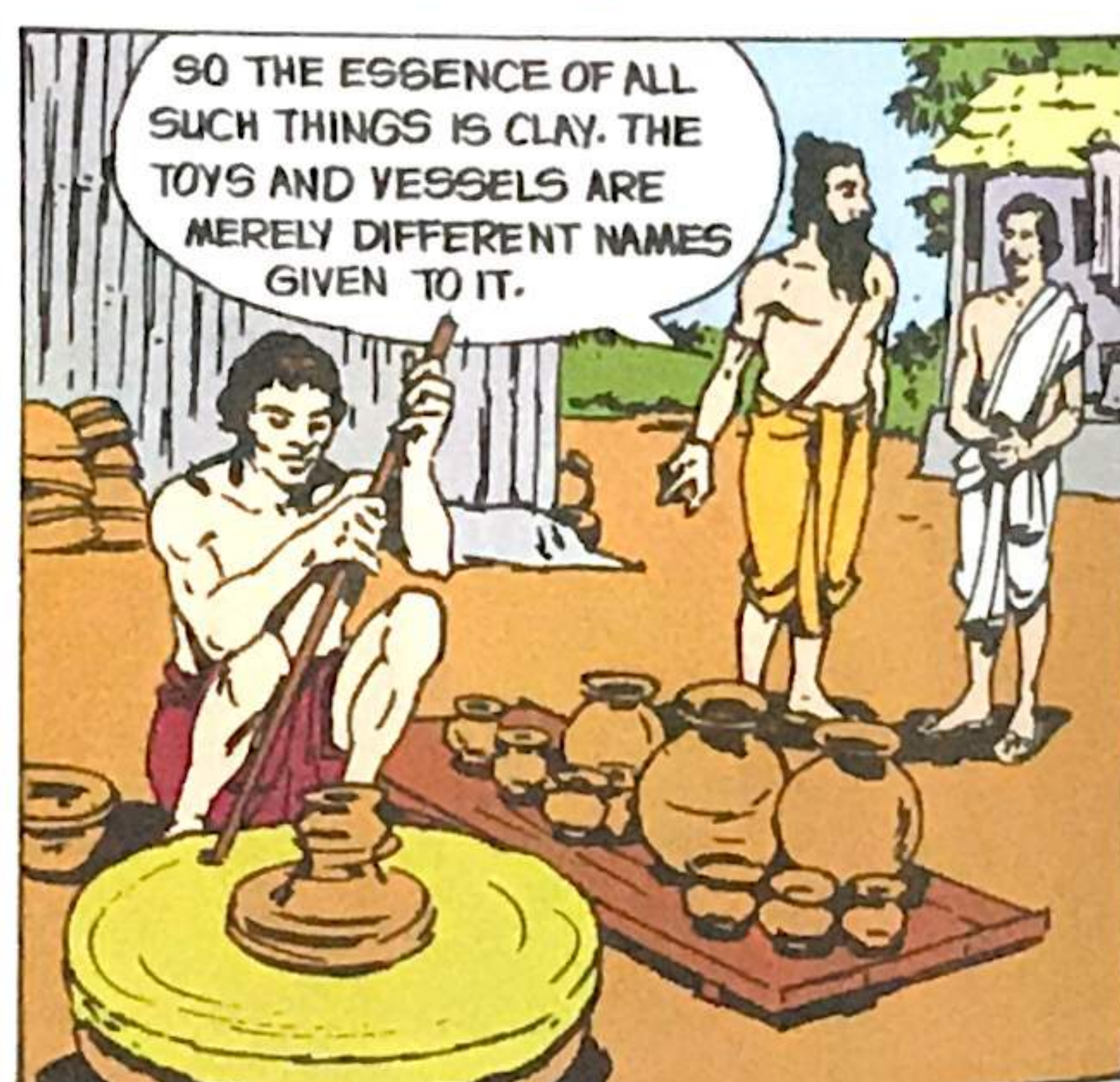
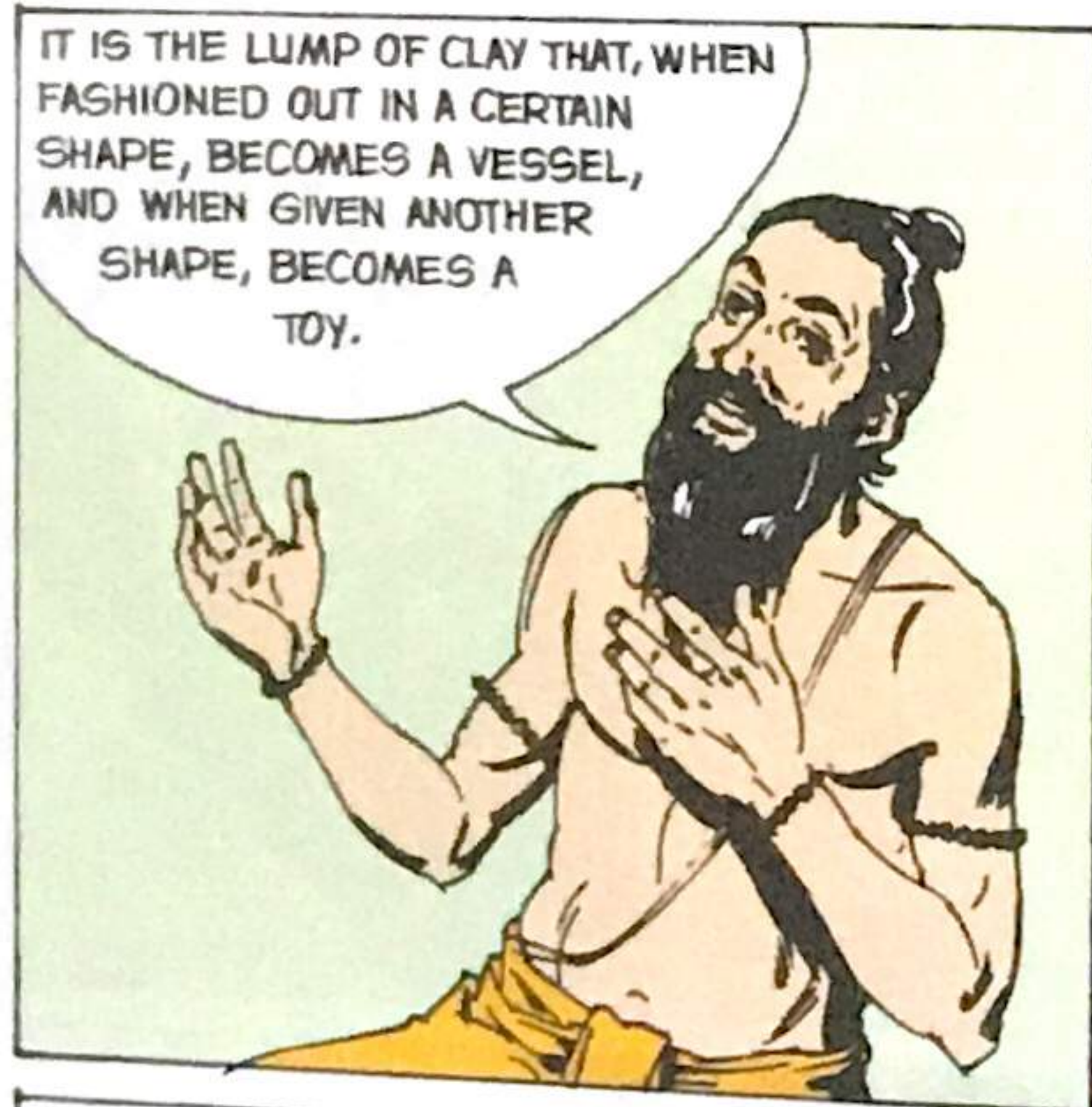
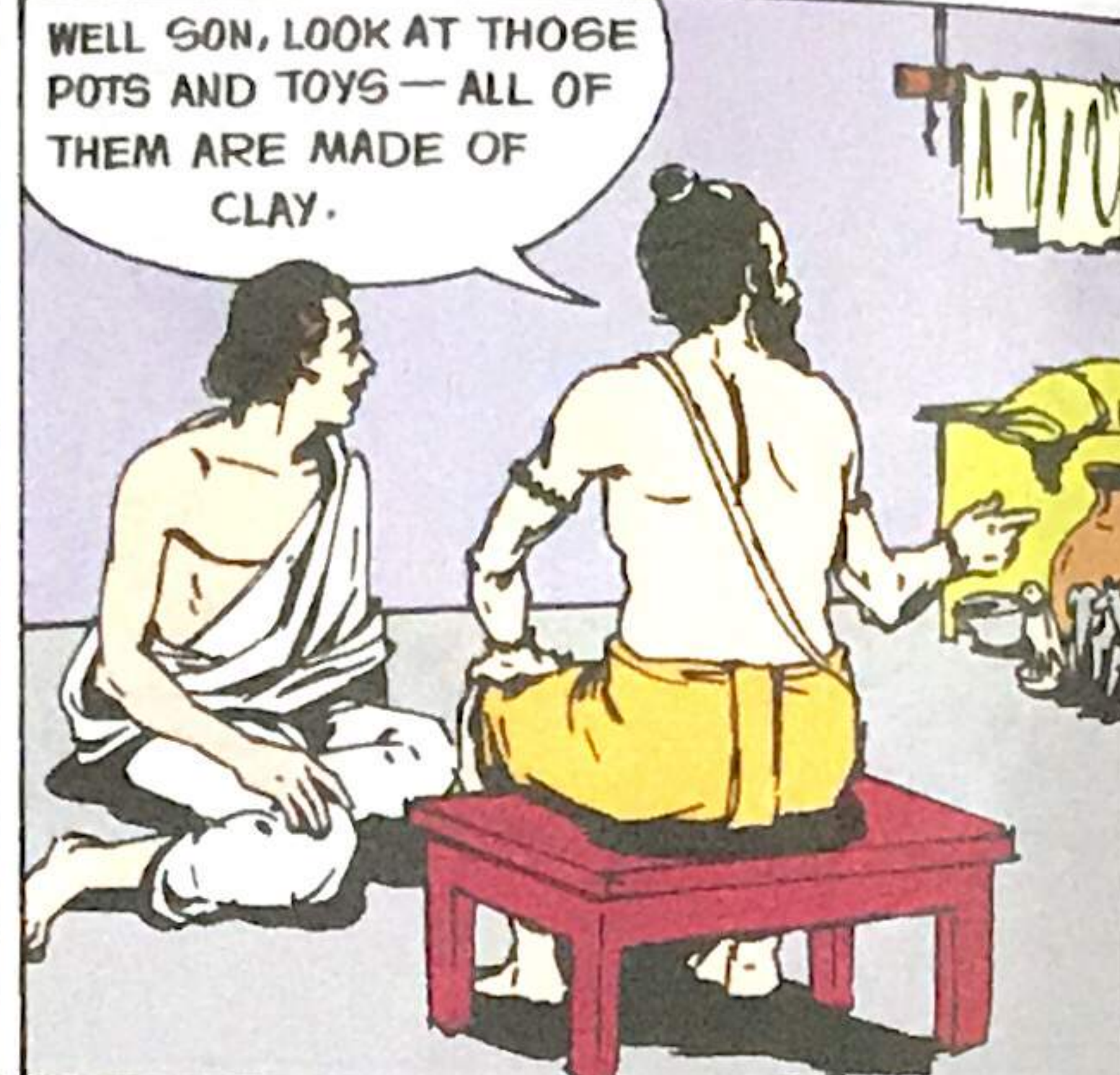
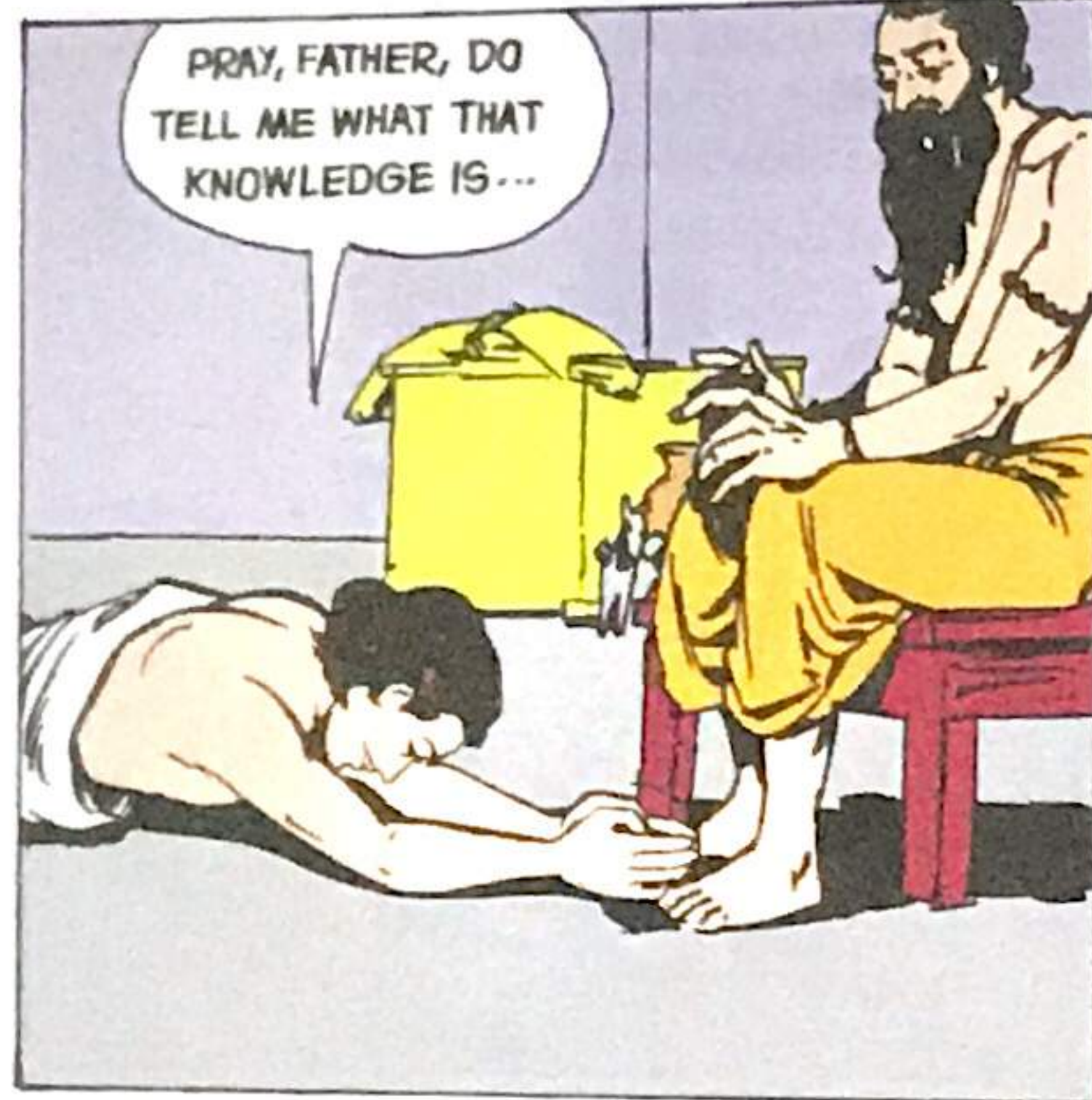
WHY HAVE YOU FALLEN SILENT, FATHER?

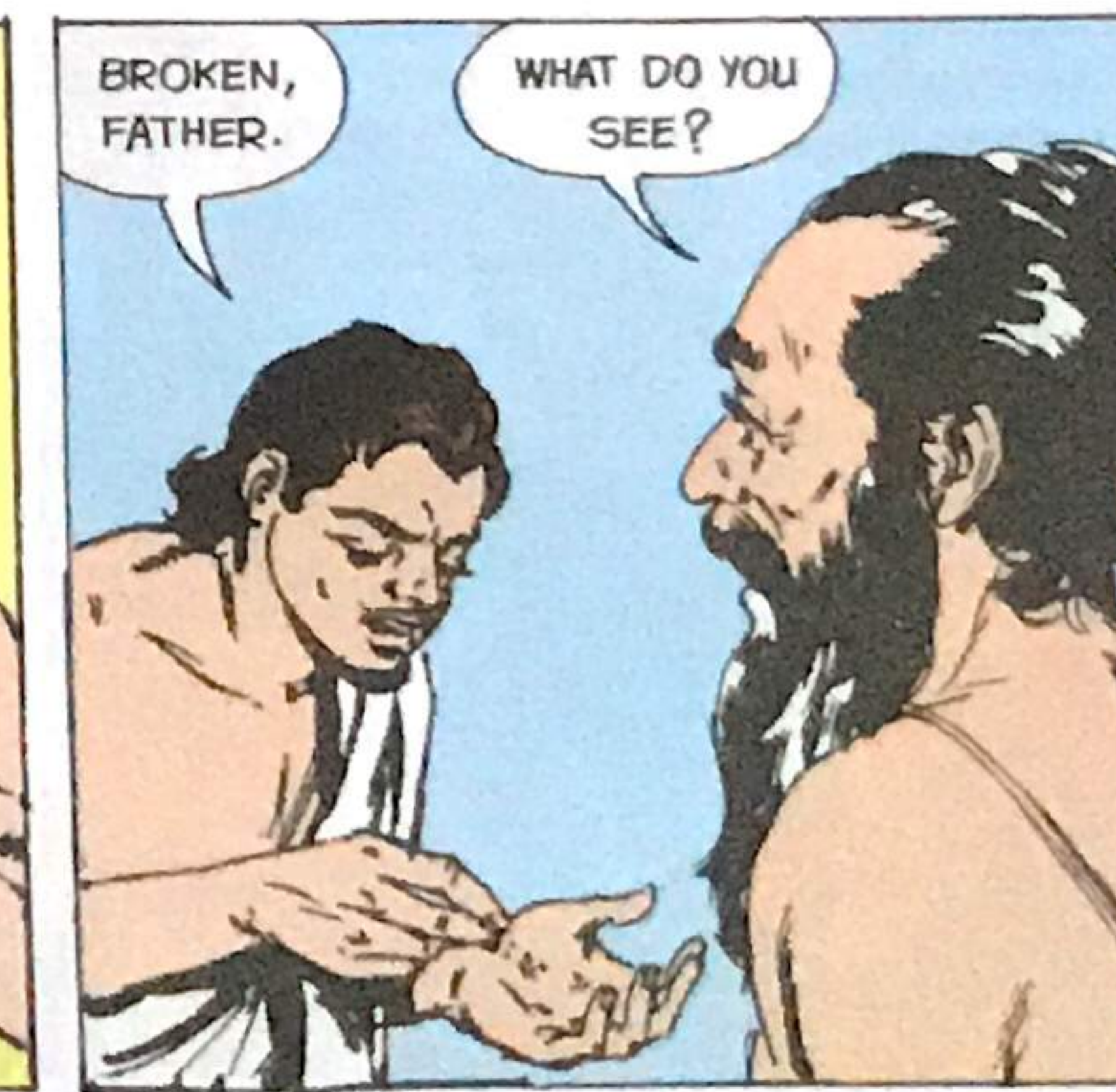
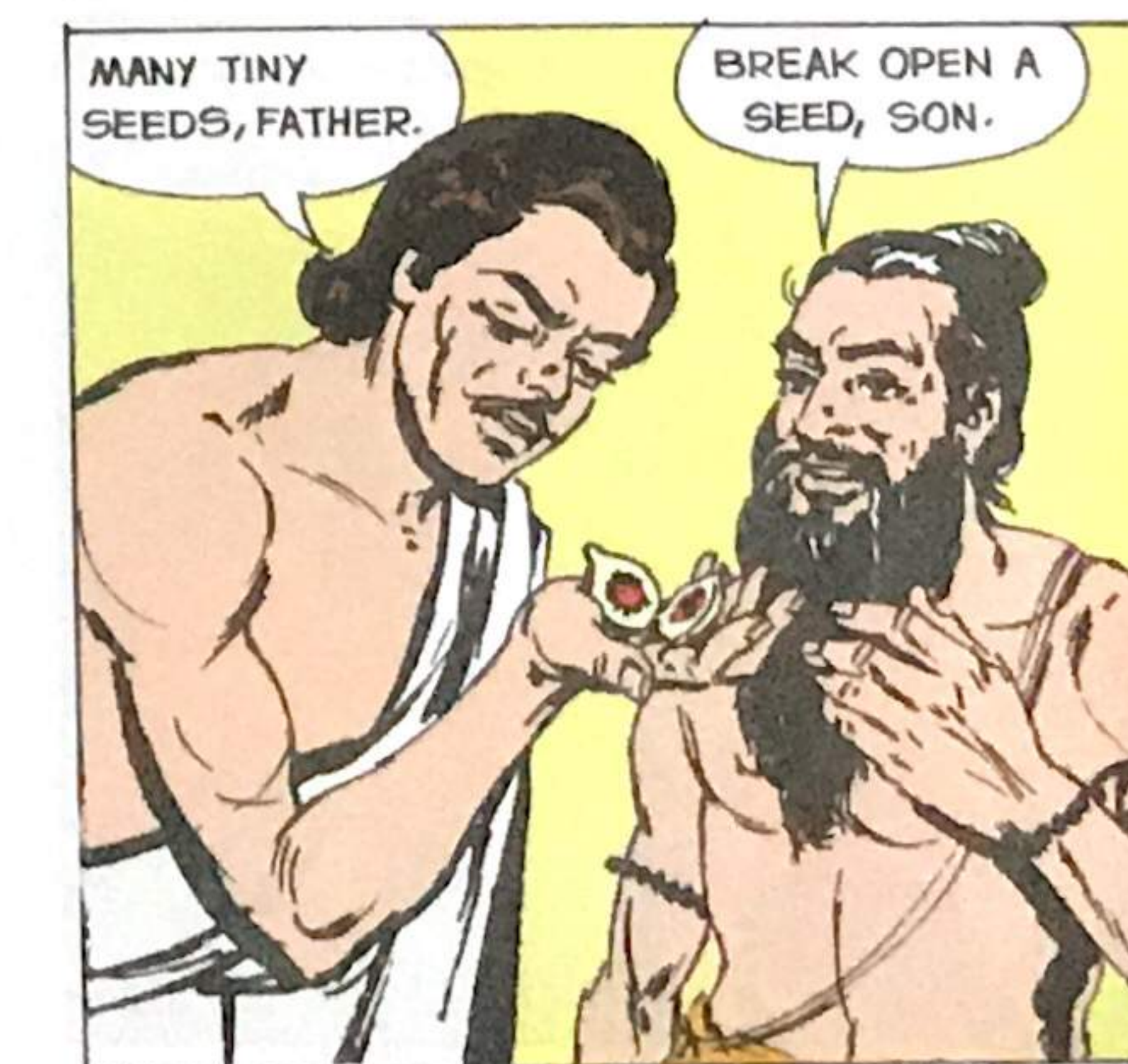
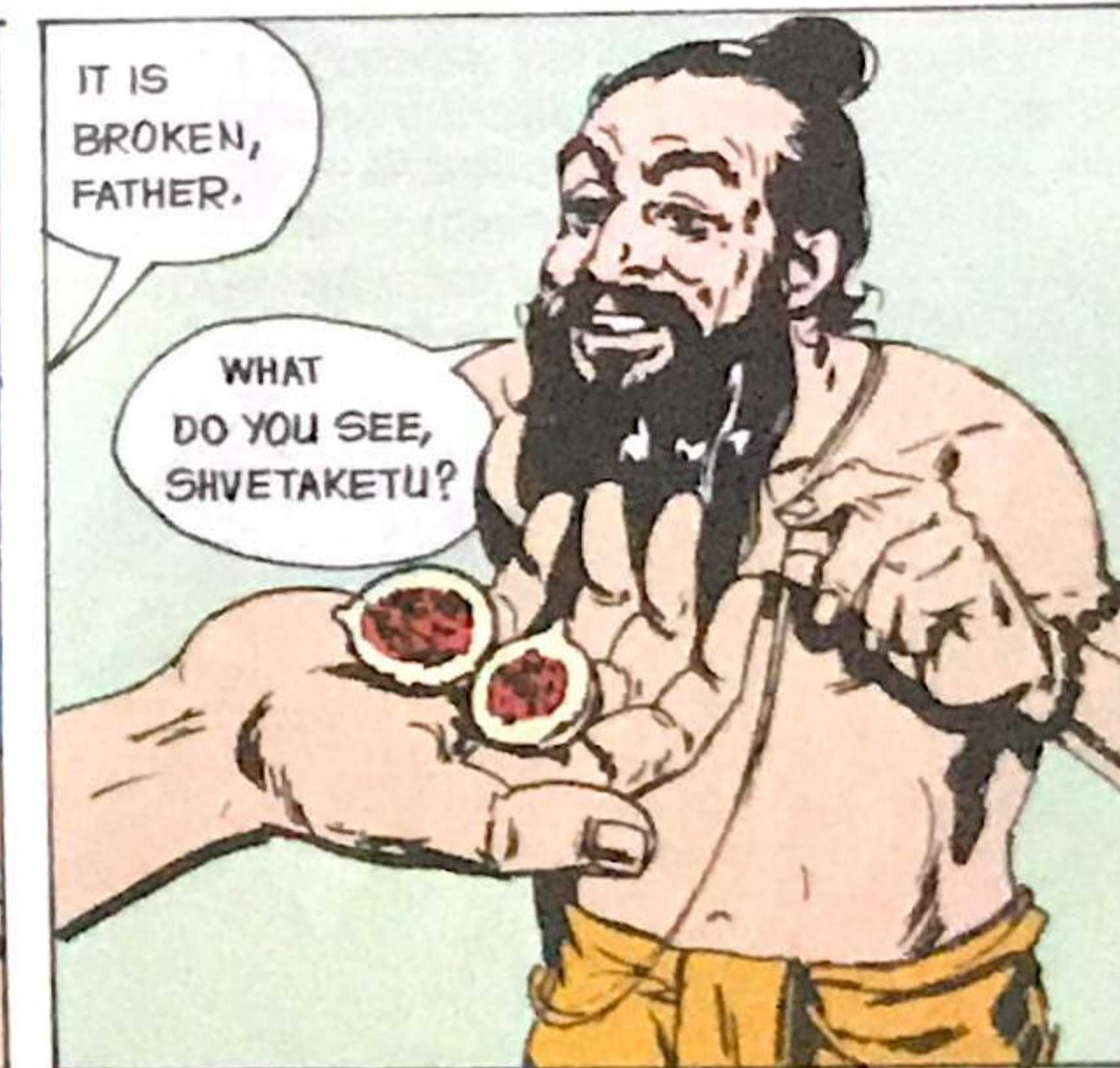
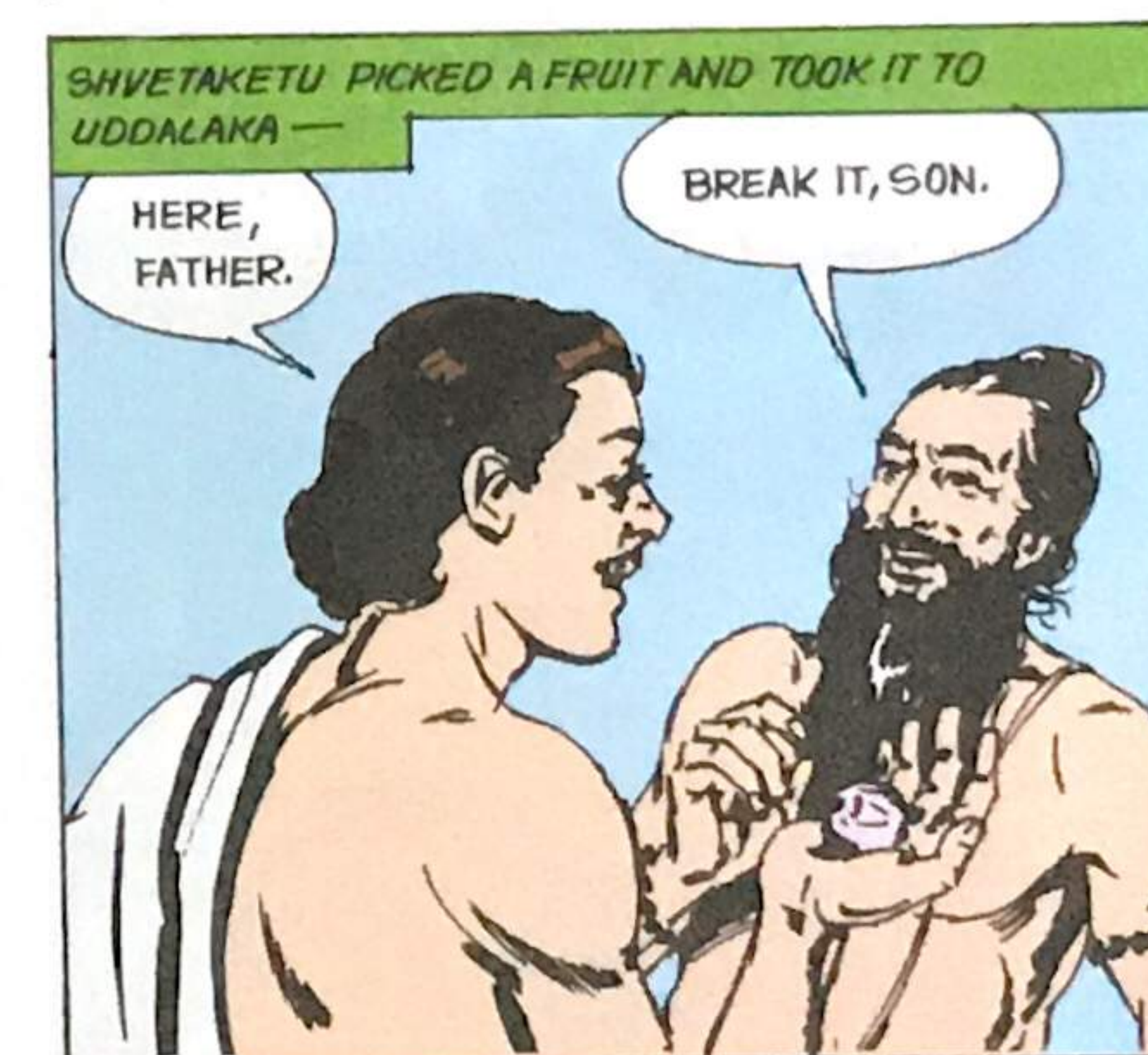
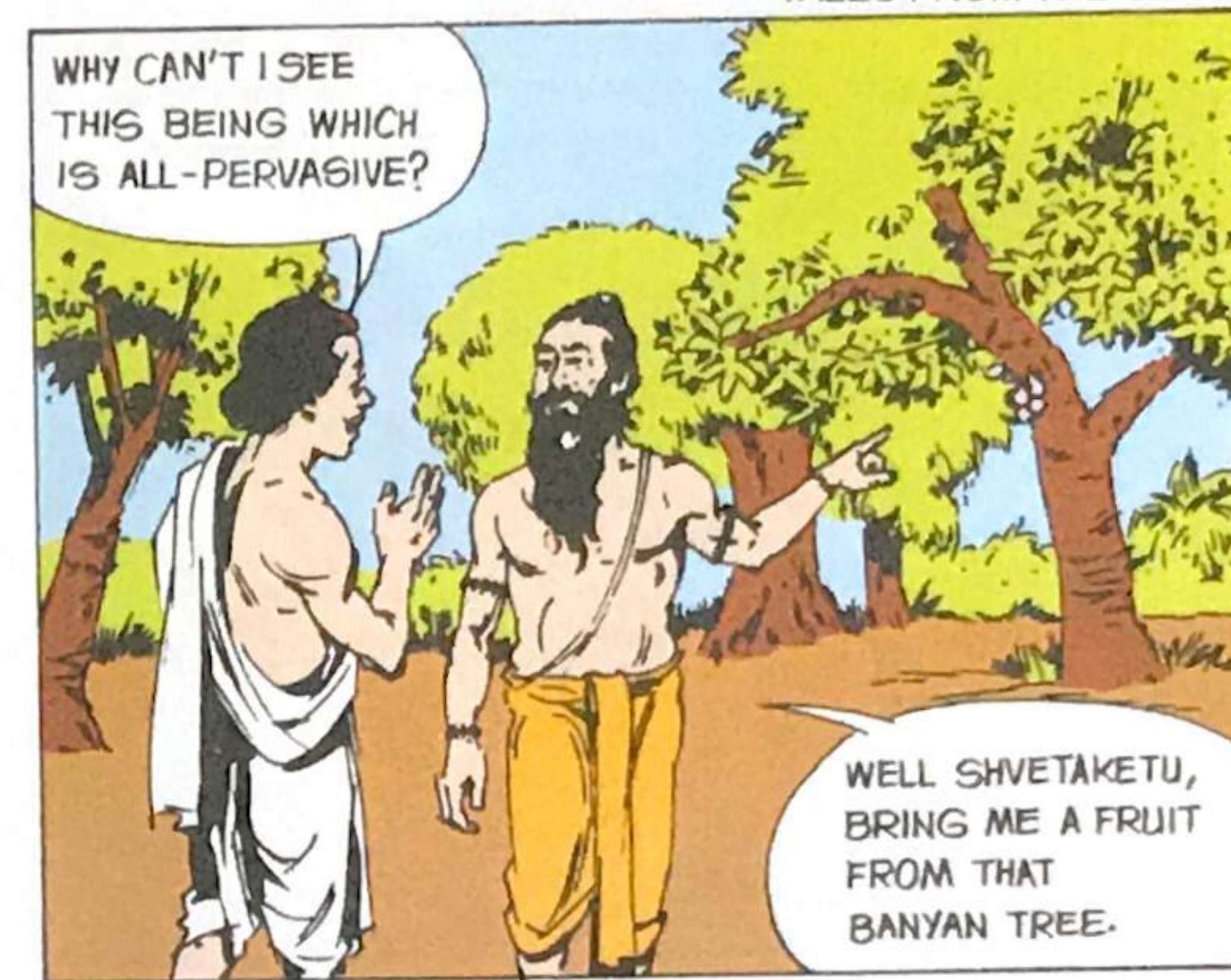
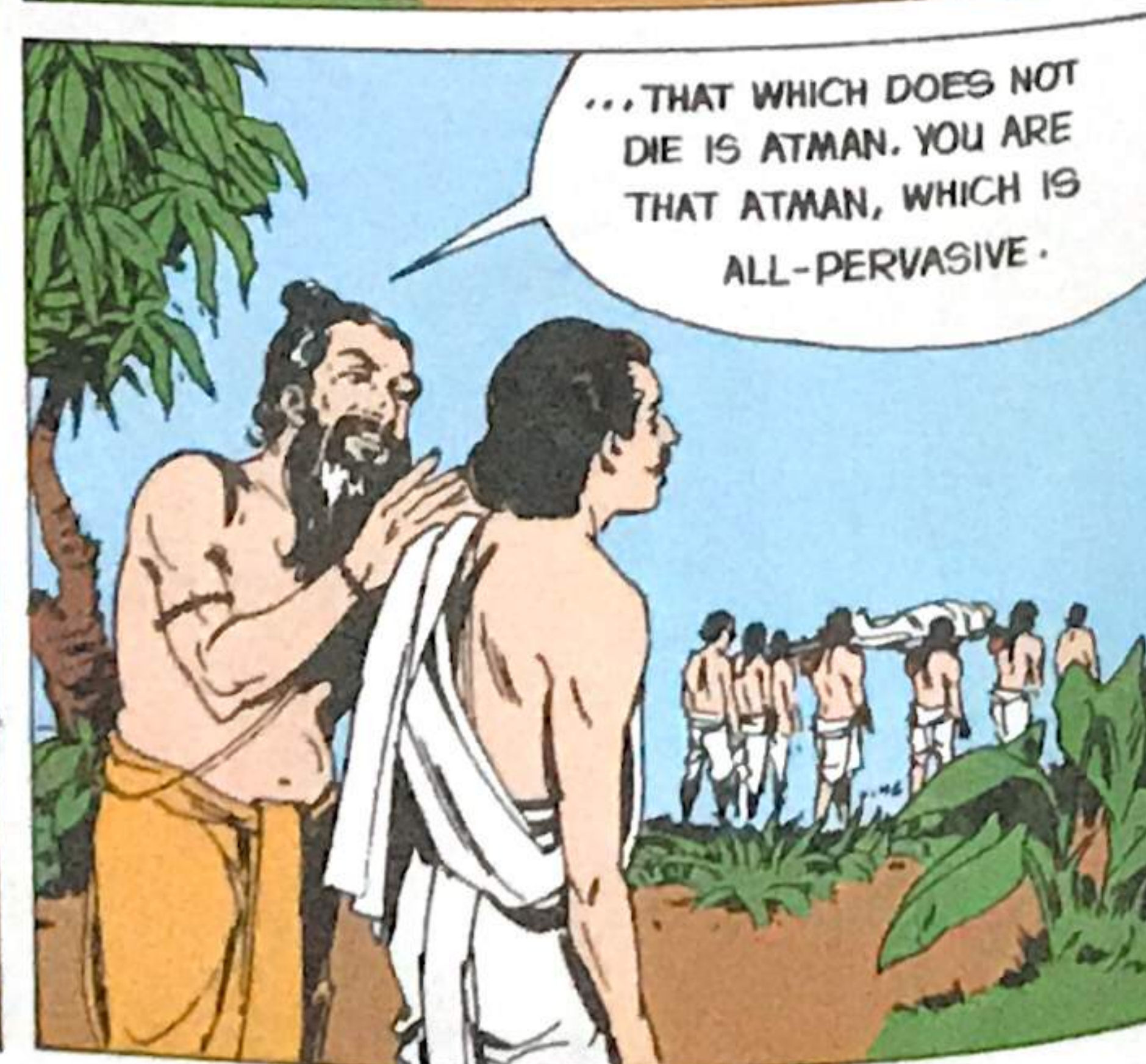
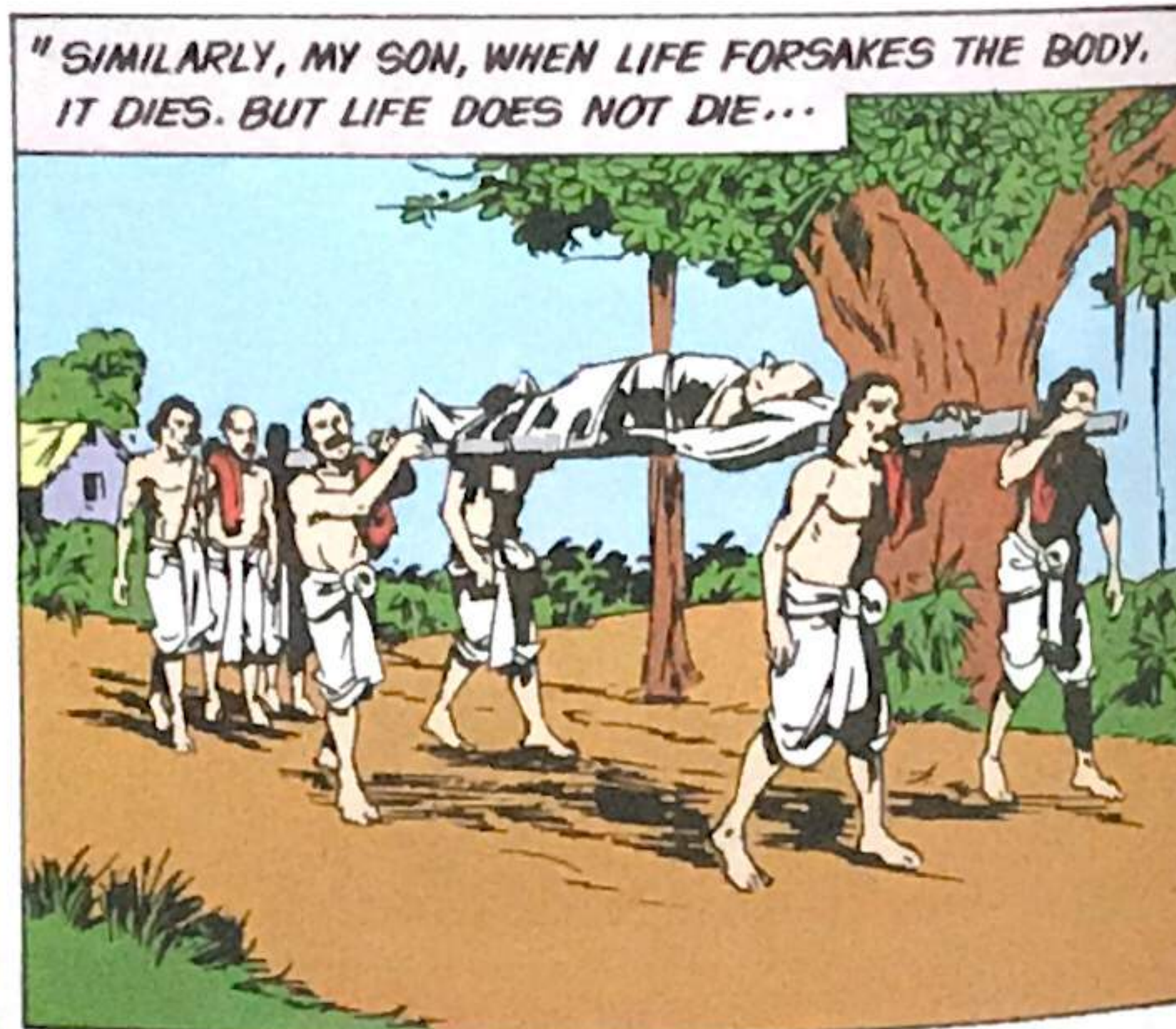
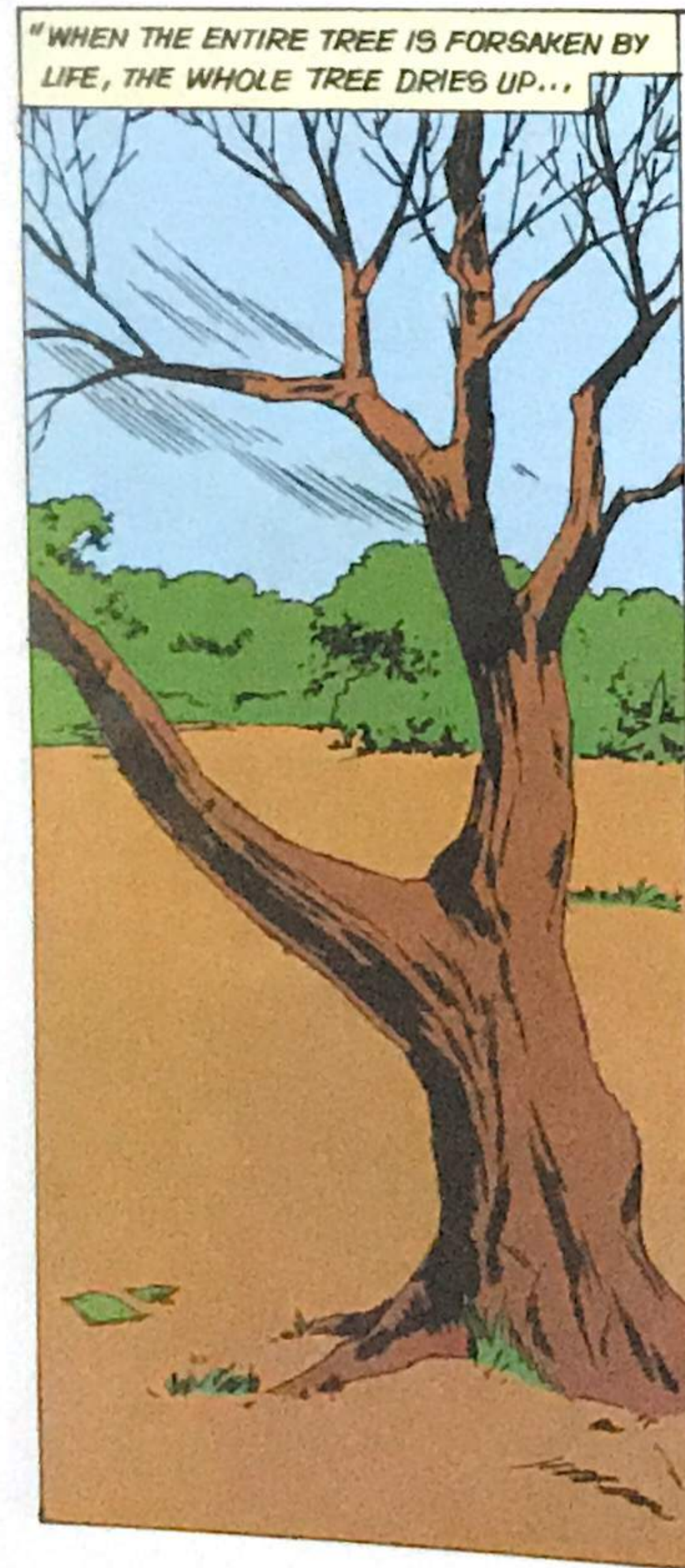
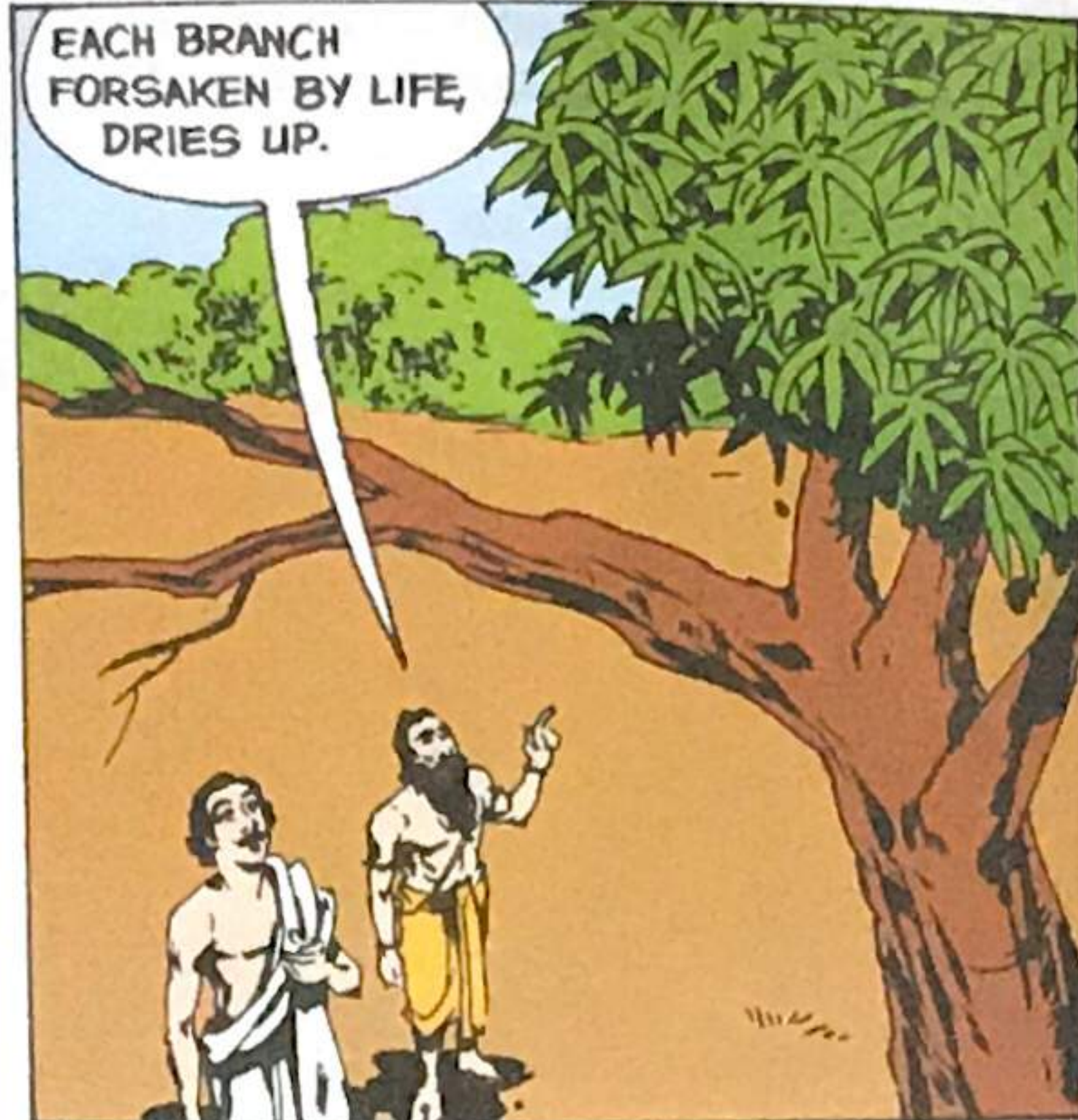
DEAR CHILD, YOU SAY YOU KNOW EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE KNOWN...

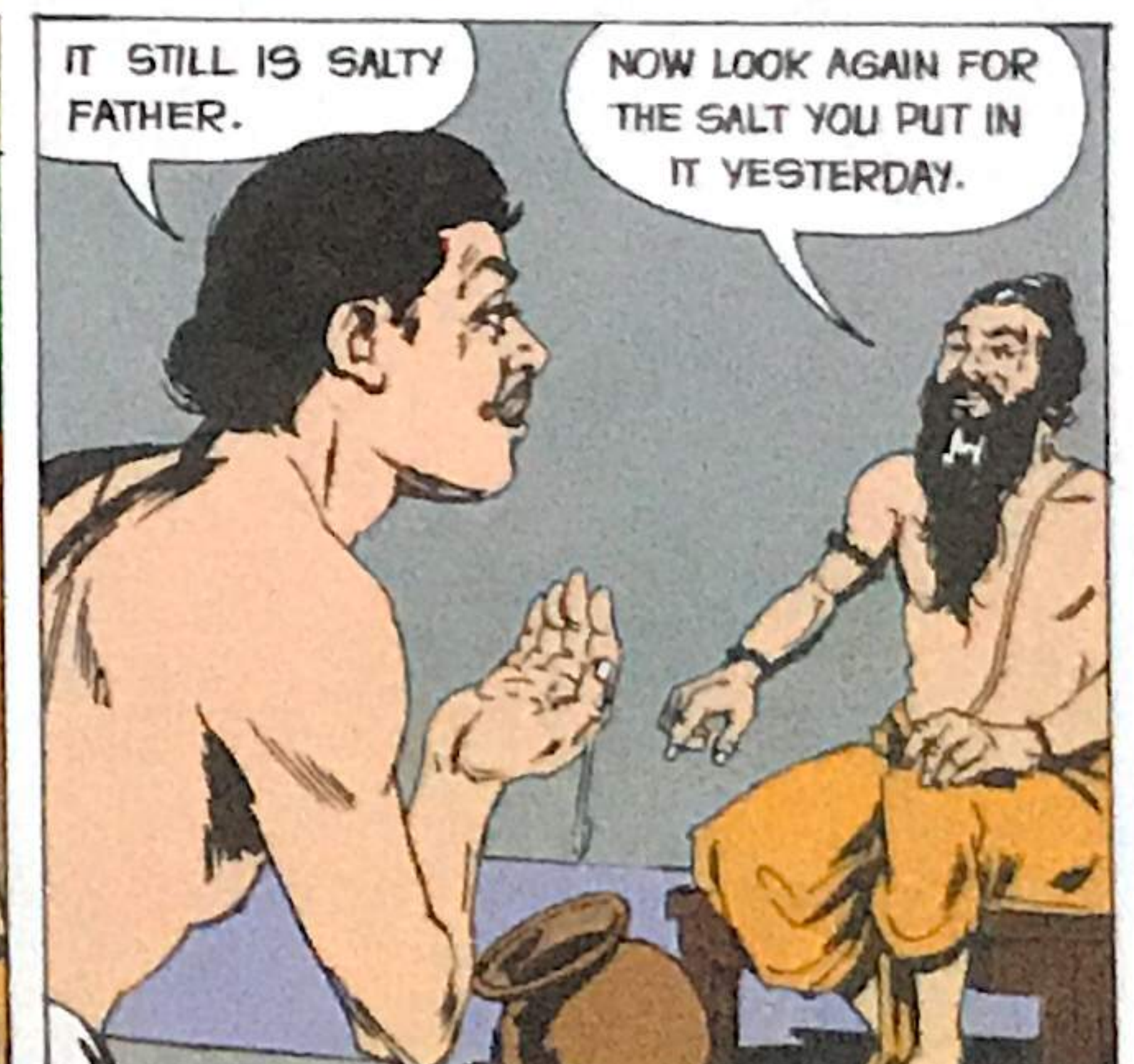
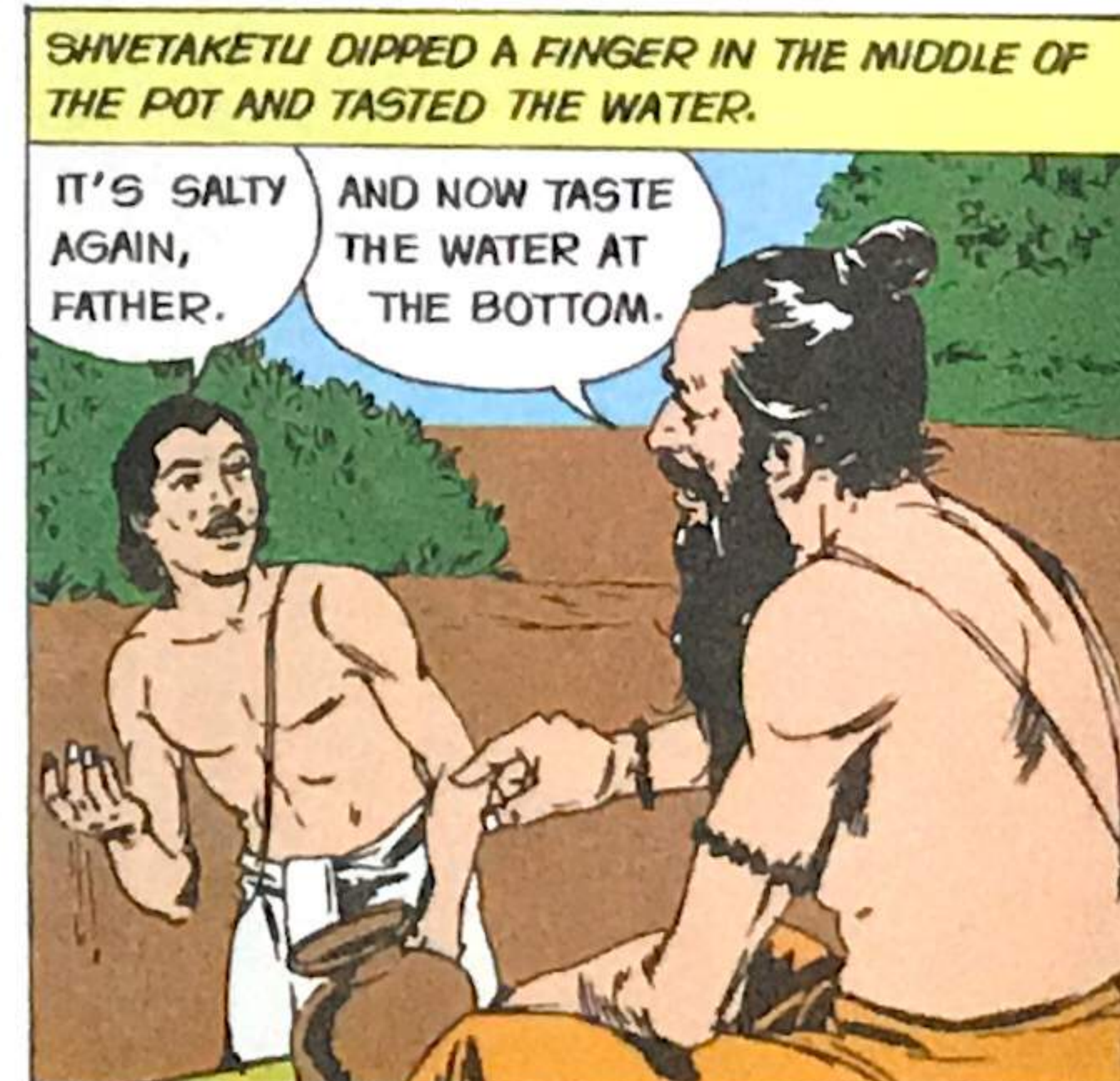
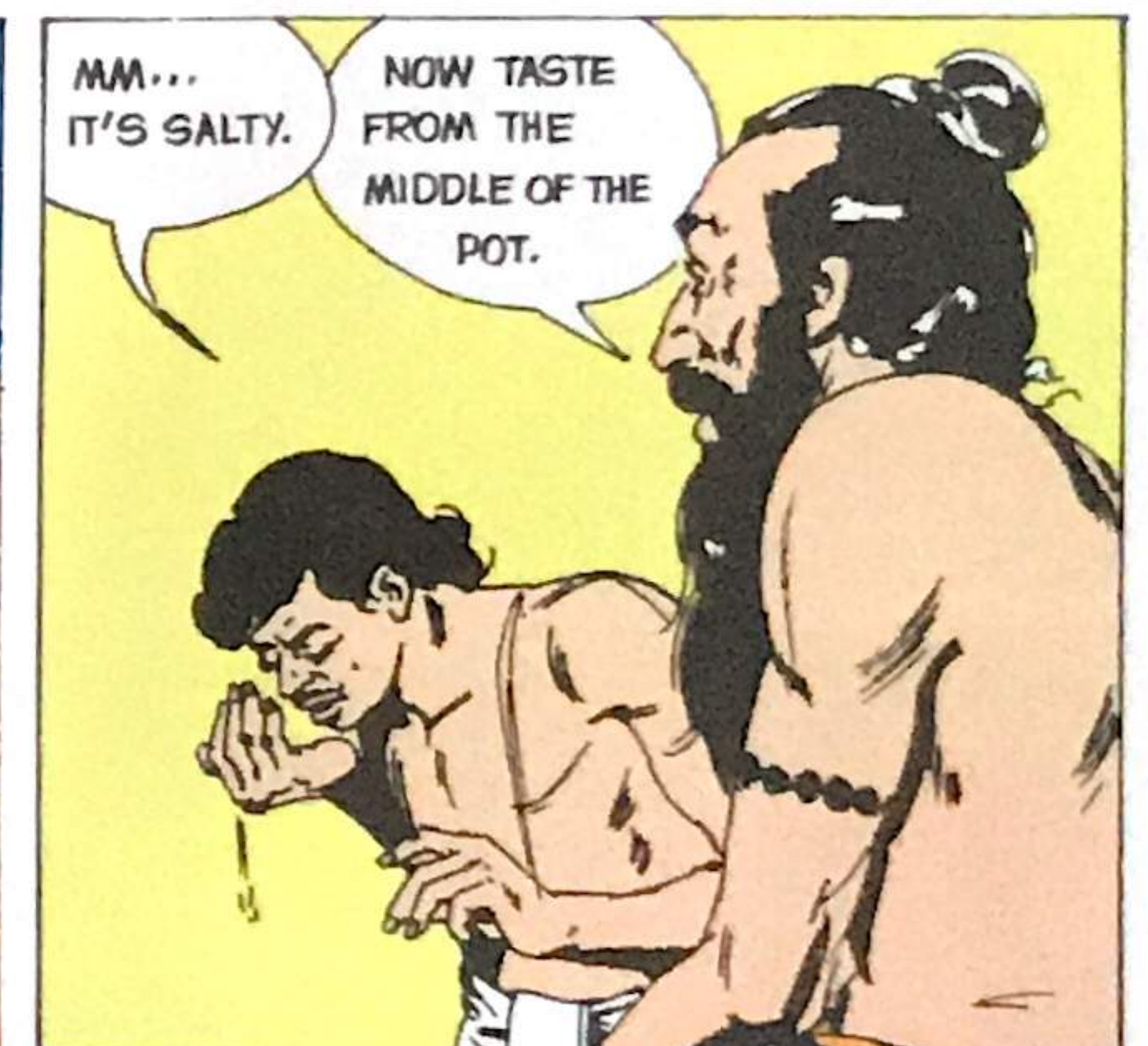
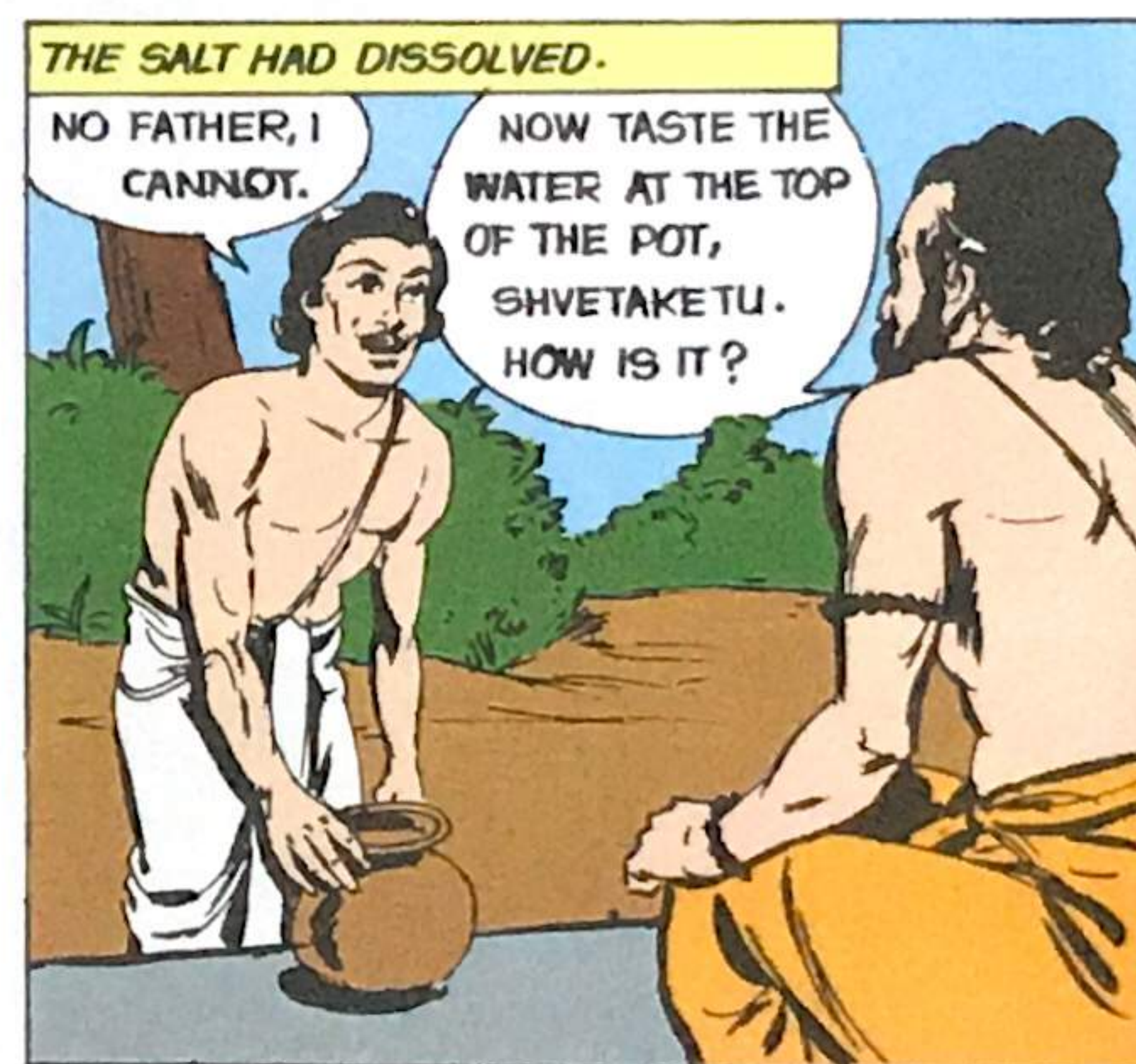
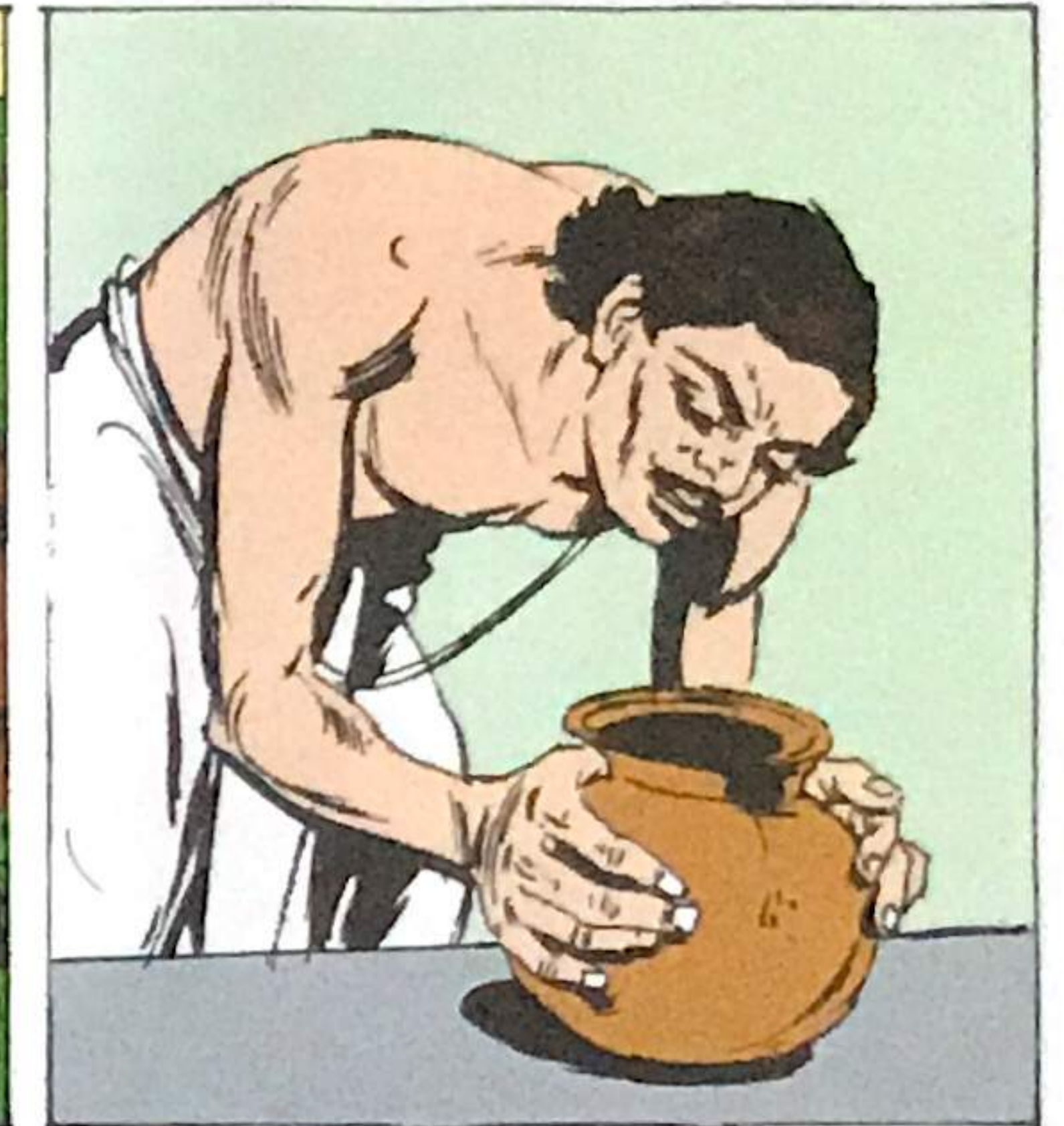
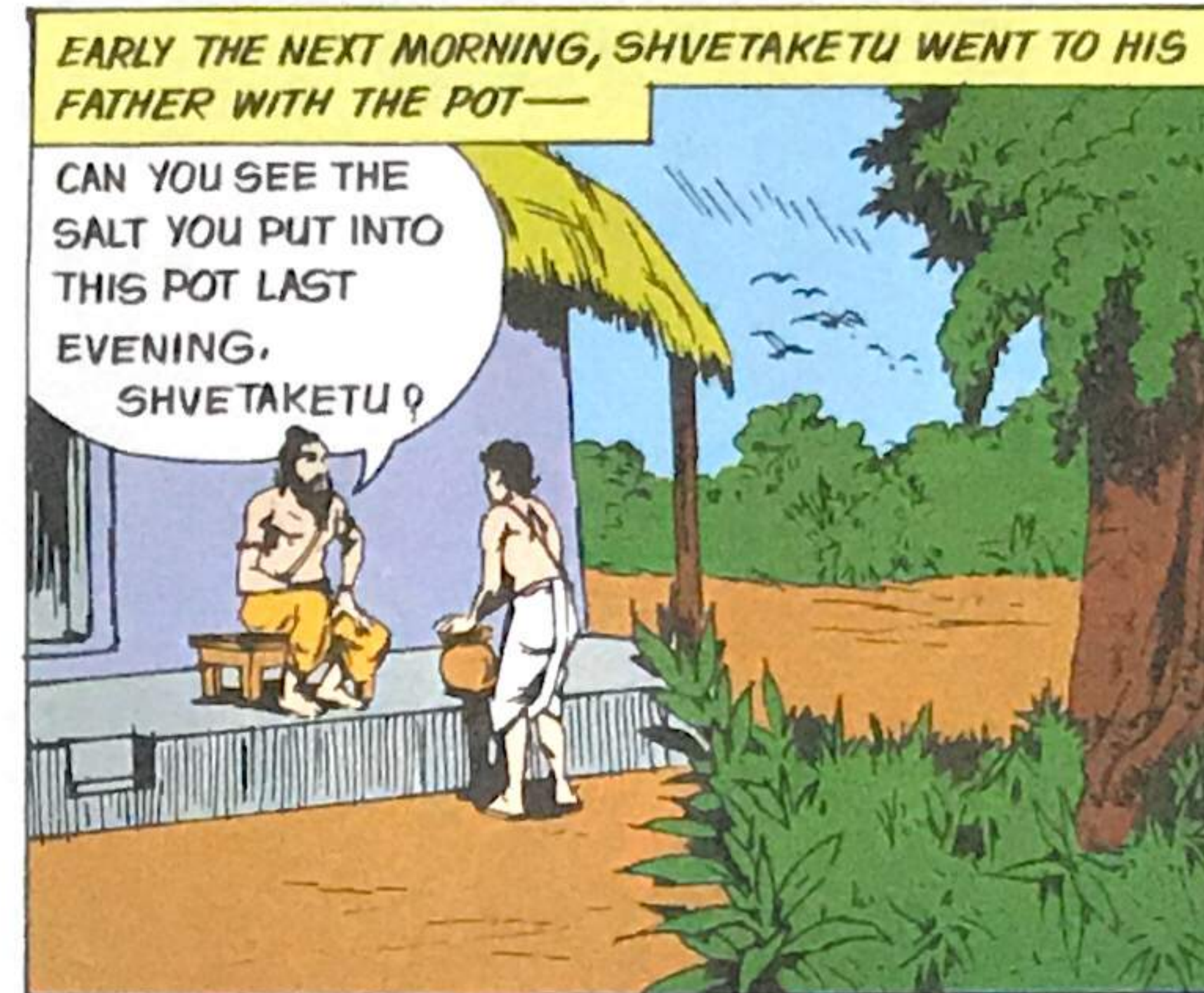
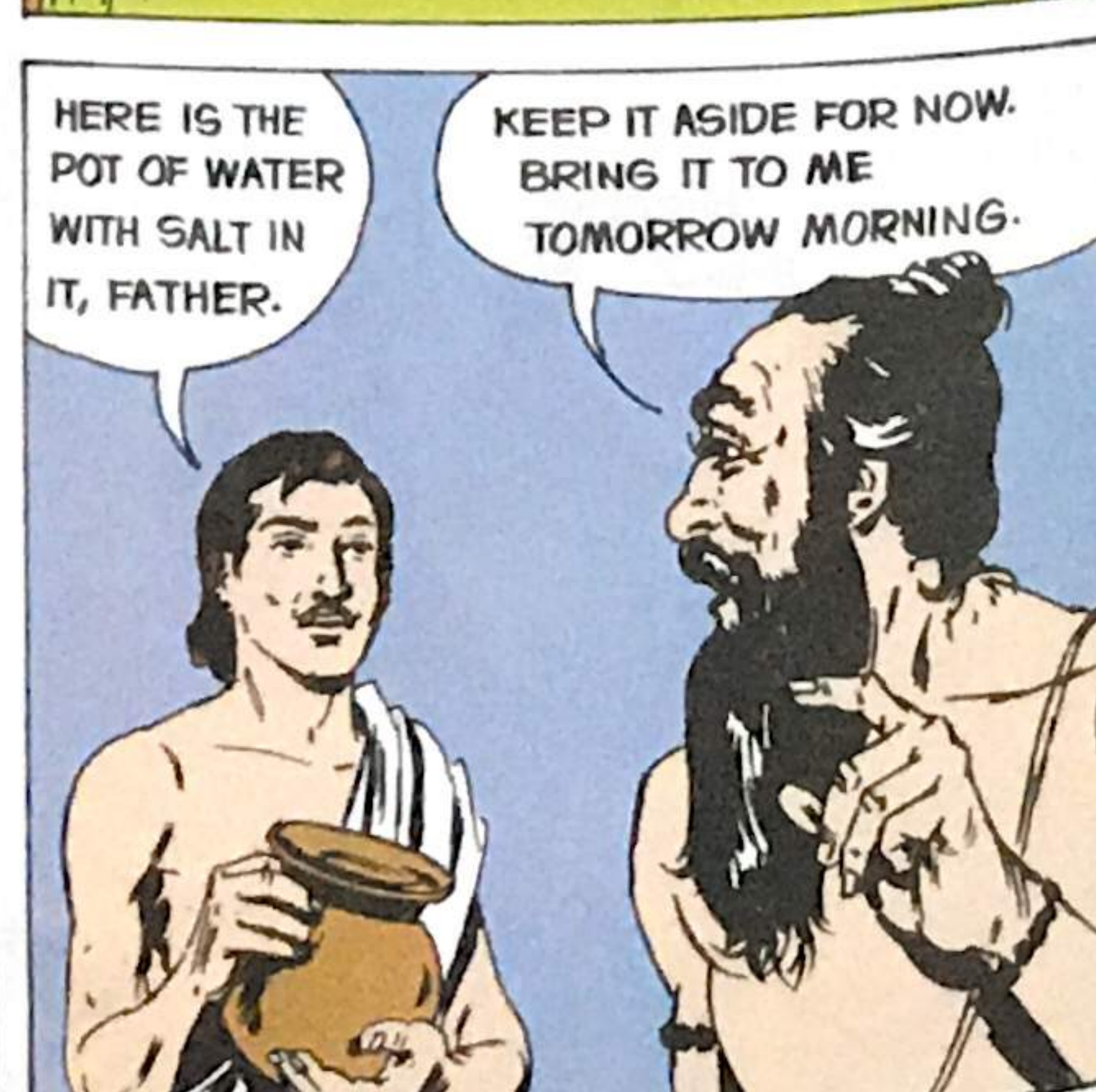
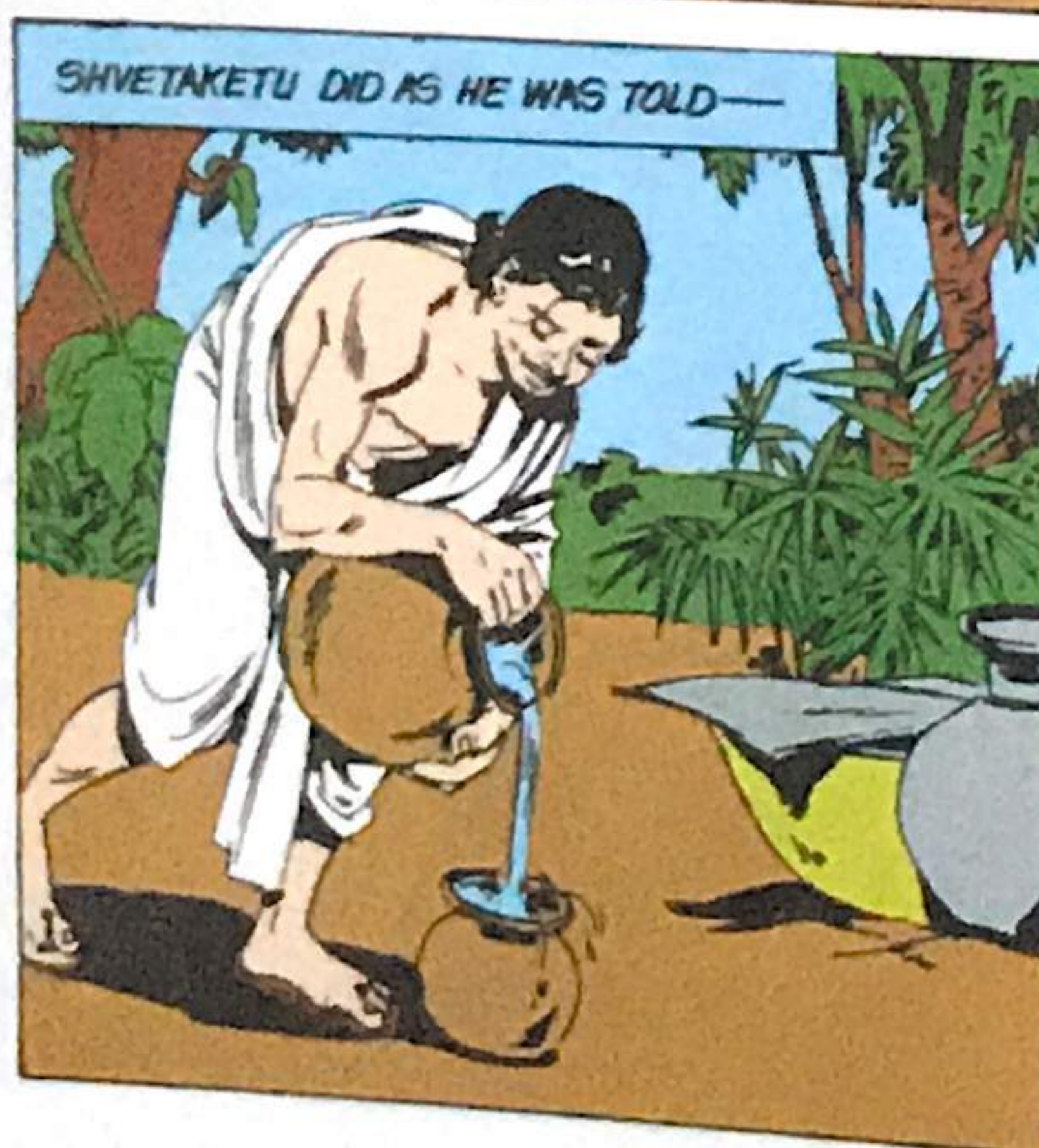
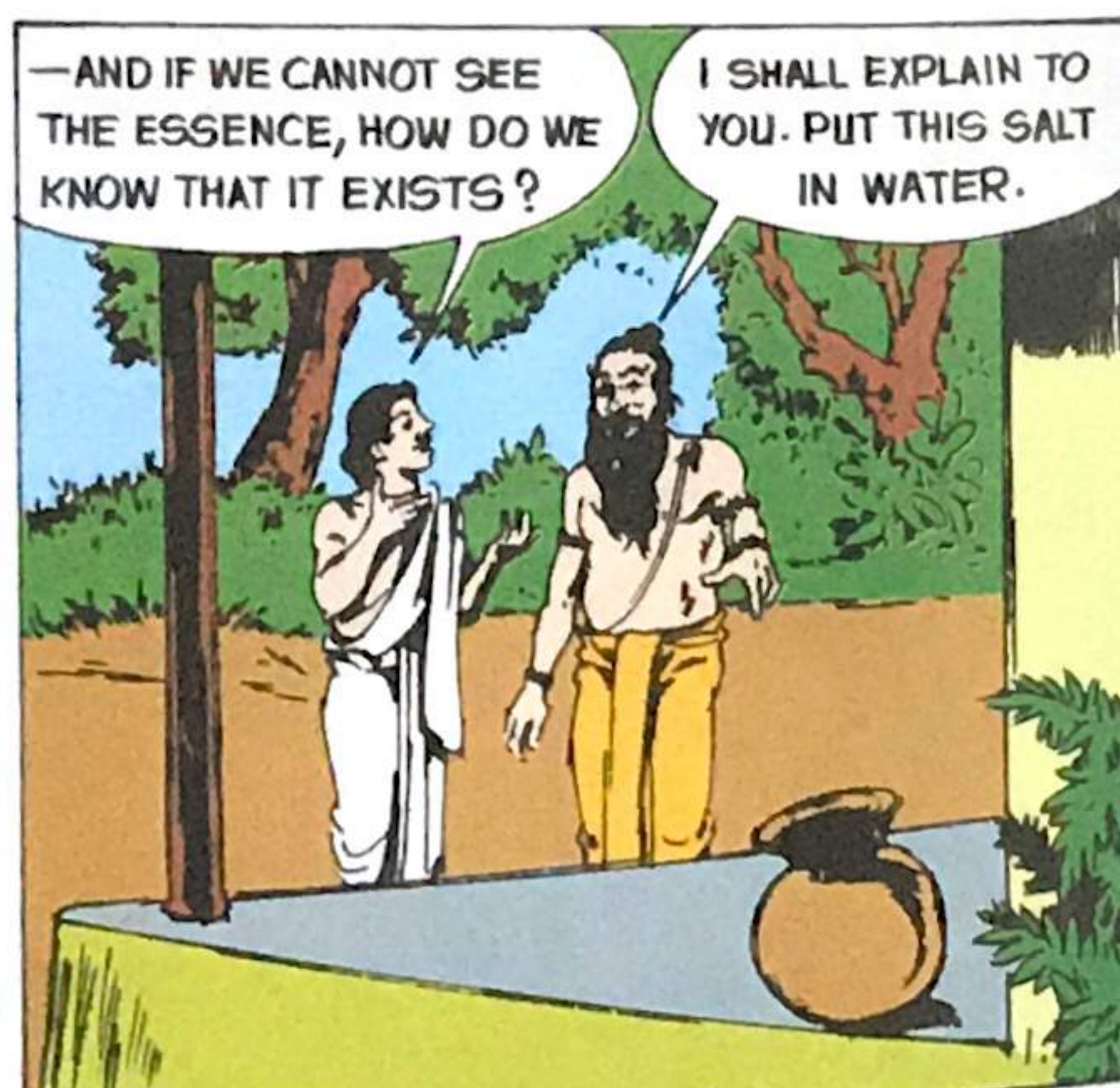
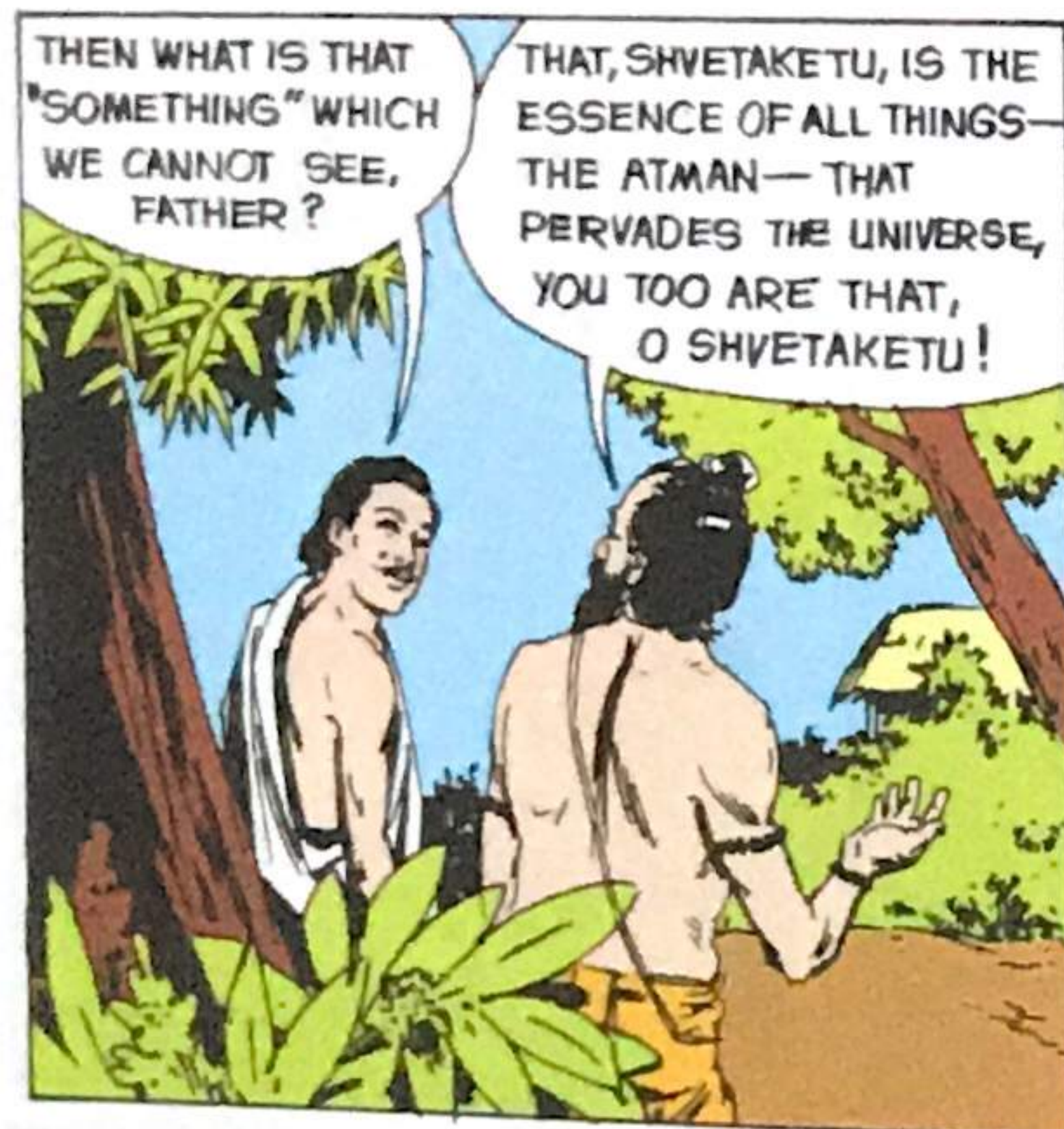
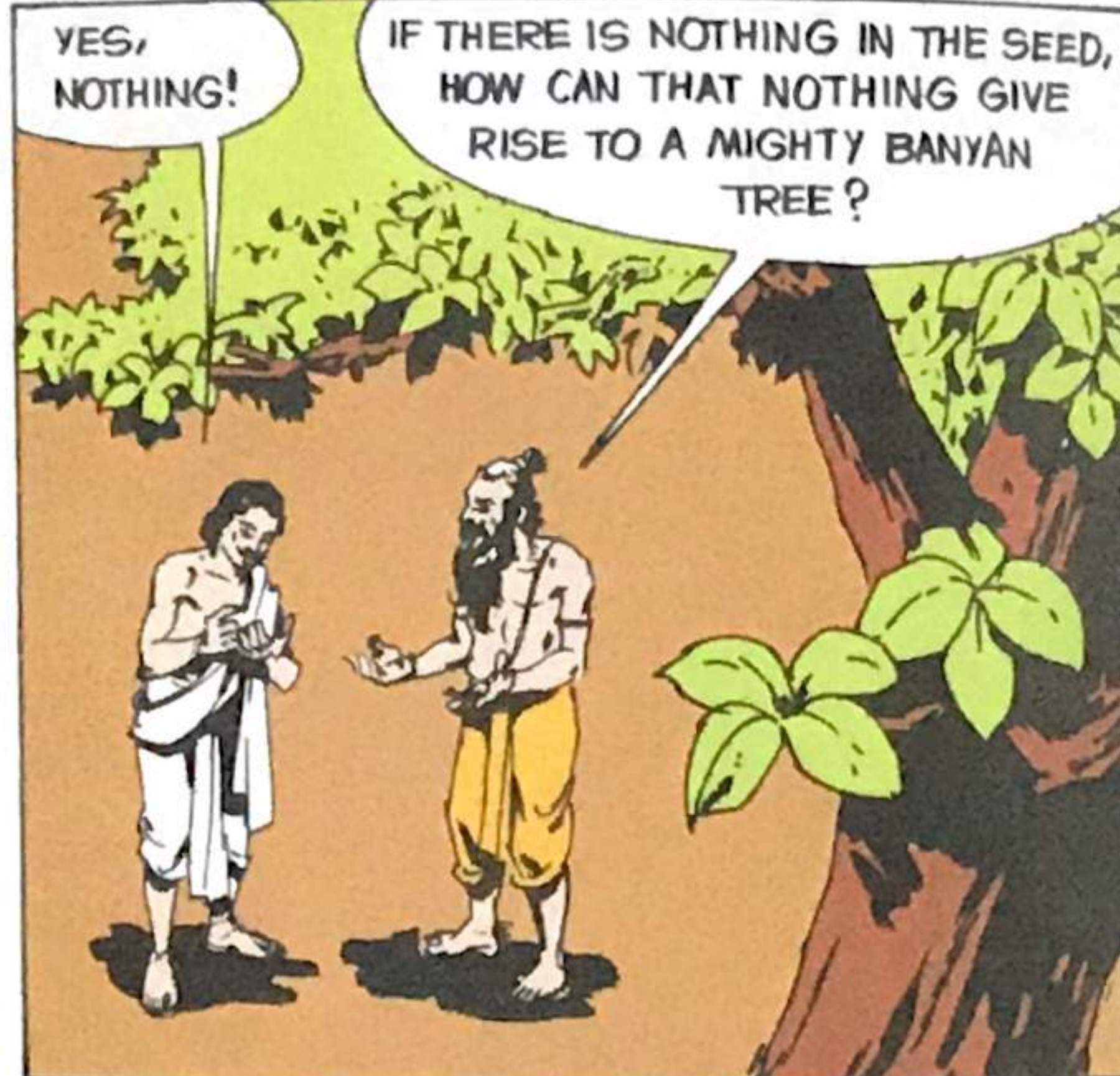


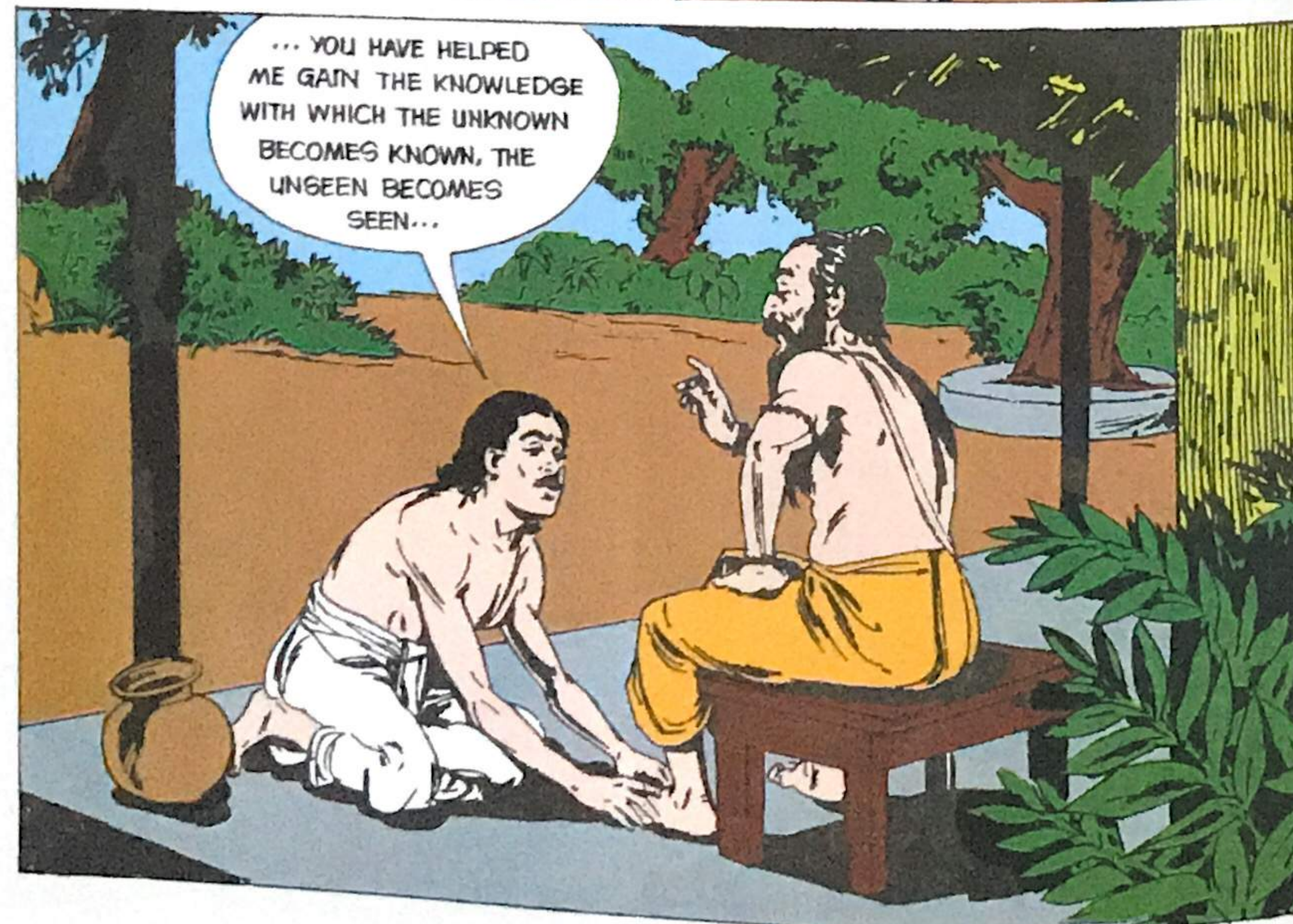
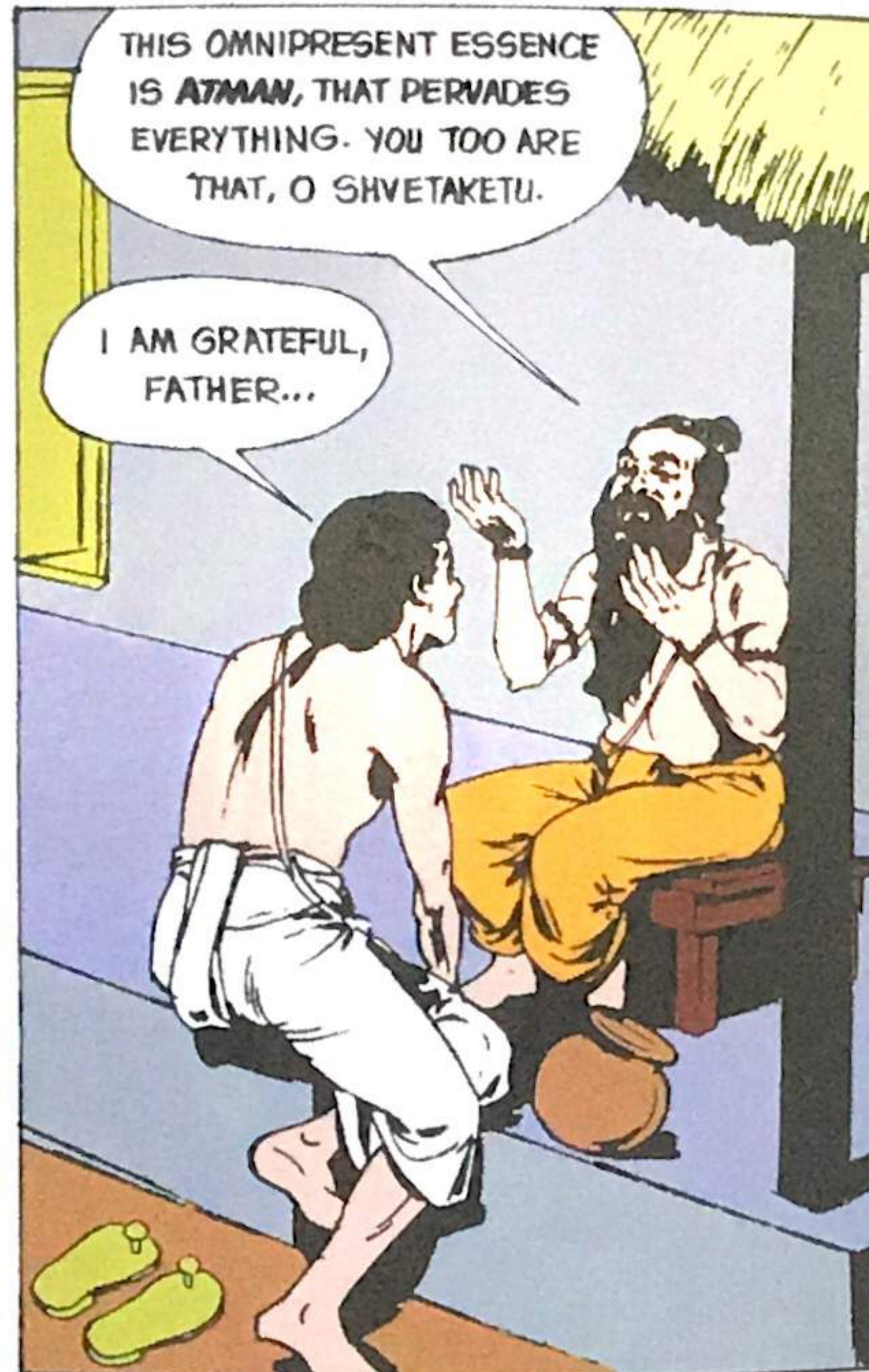
...THEN DO YOU POSSESS THAT KNOWLEDGE OR WISDOM BY WHICH WHAT IS UNKNOWN BECOMES KNOWN; WHAT IS UNSEEN BECOMES SEEN?



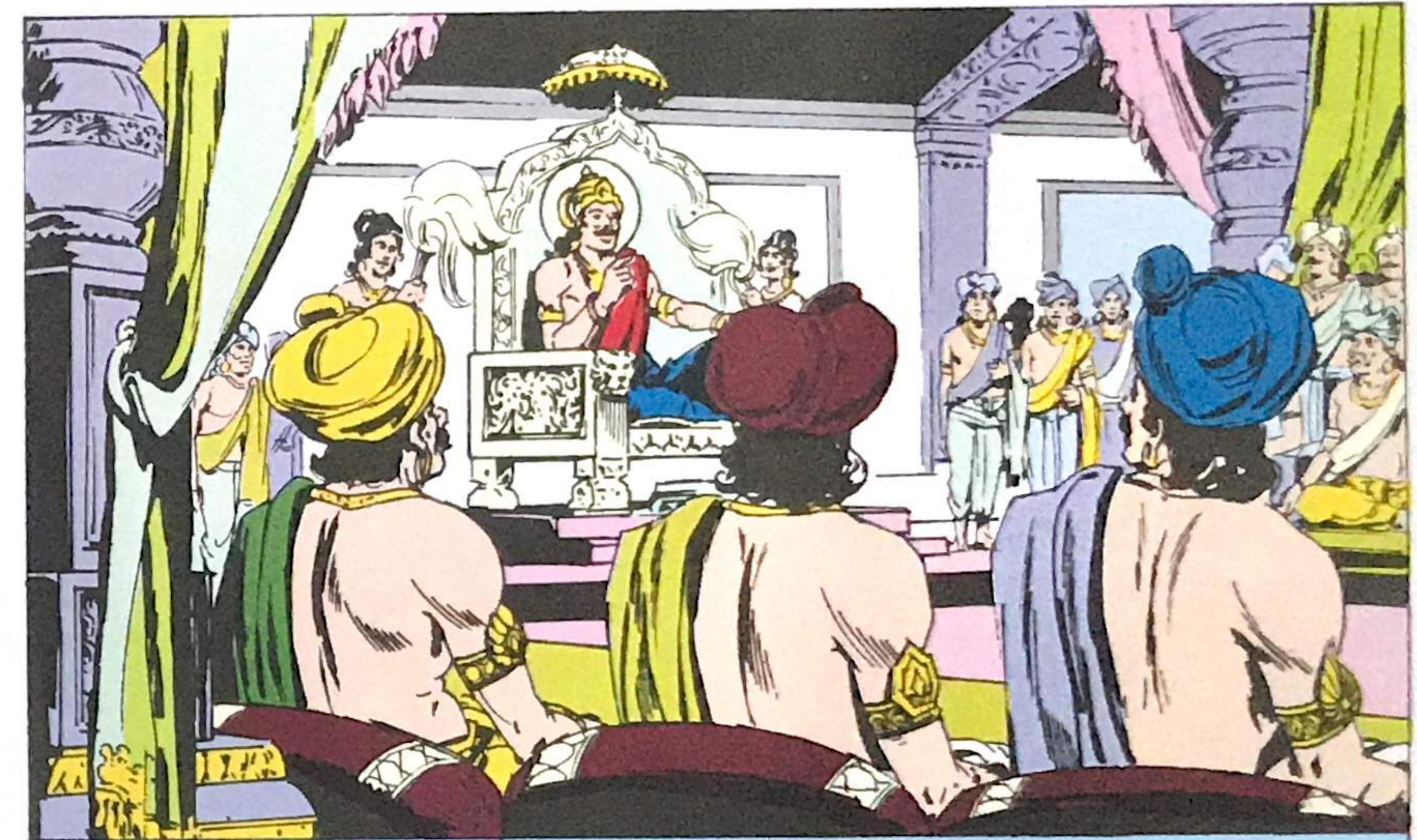






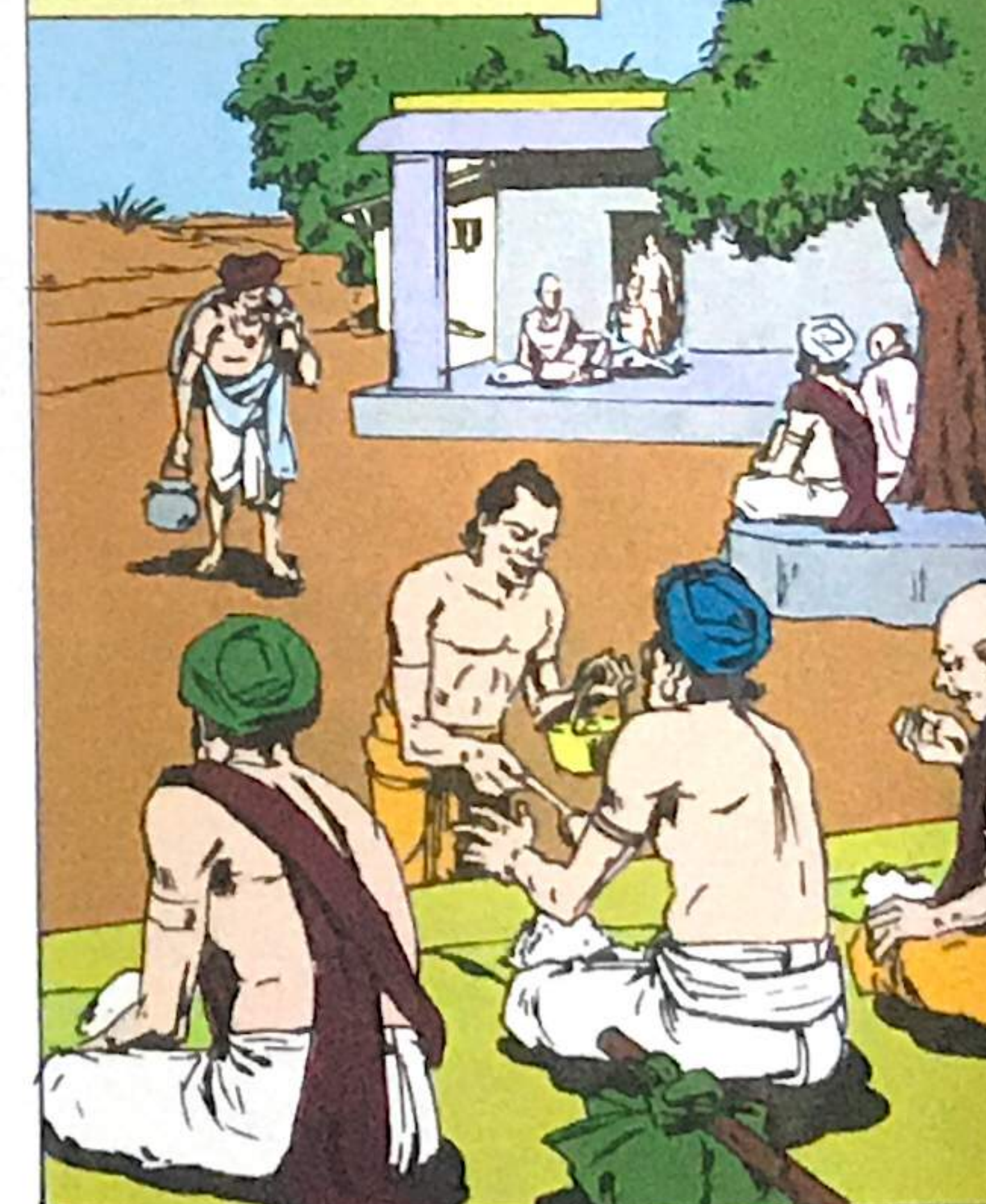


RAIKVA THE CARTMAN*

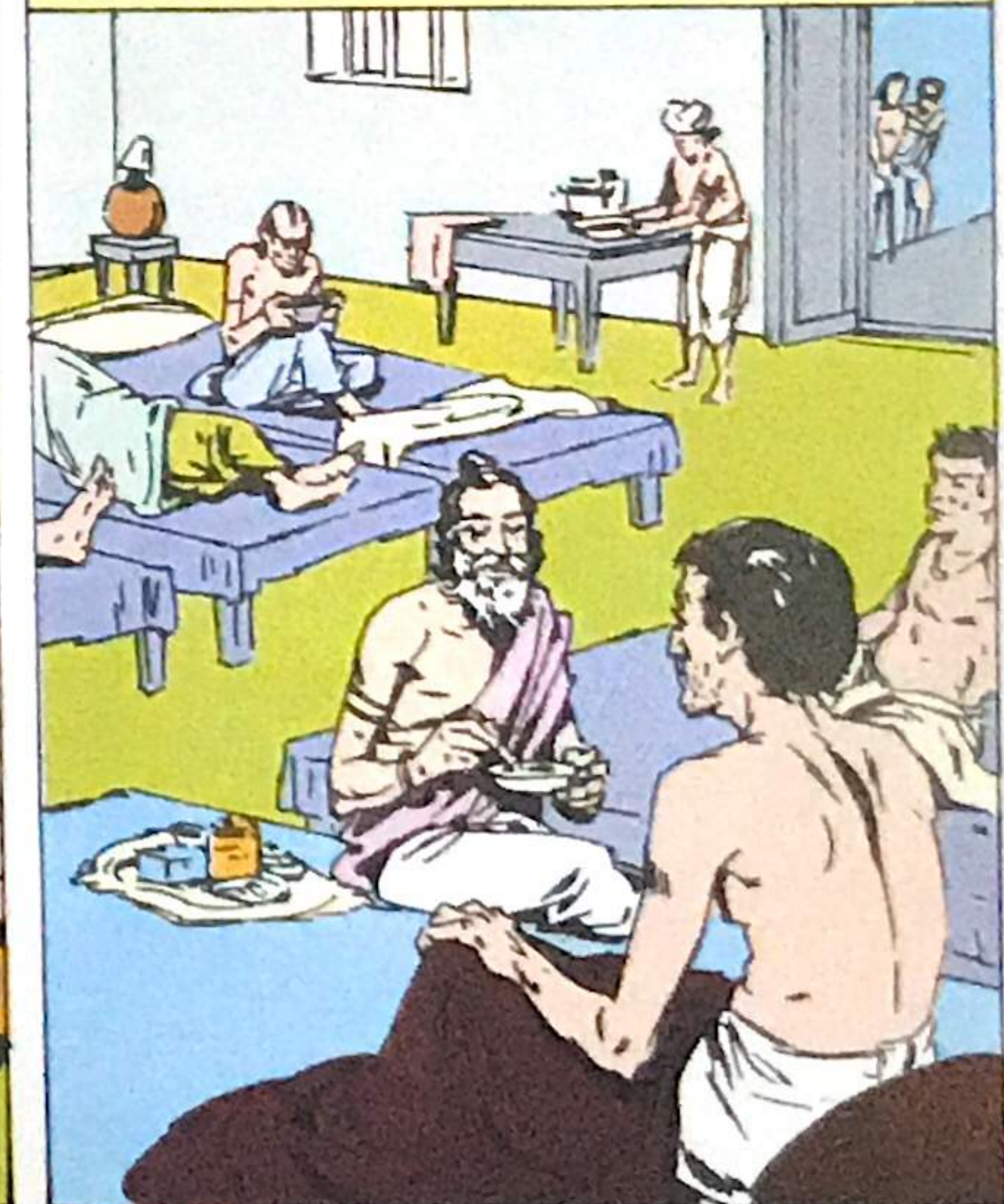


JANASHRUTI, THE KING OF MAHAYRASHA WAS A BENEVOLENT AND GENEROUS RULER.

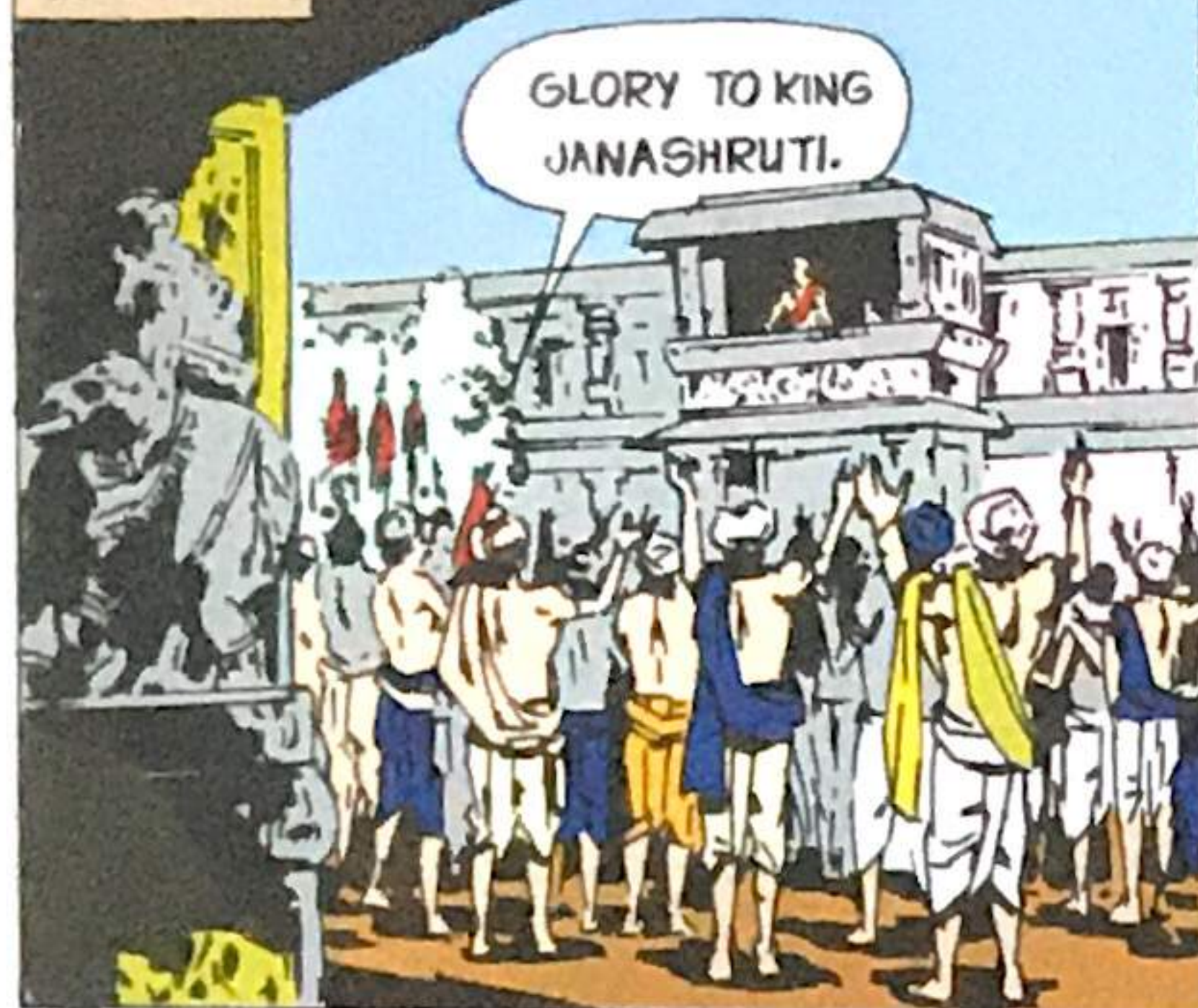
HE BUILT REST HOUSES ALONG THE ROADS OF HIS KINGDOM, WHERE FREE FOOD AND LODGING WERE PROVIDED TO TRAVELLERS.



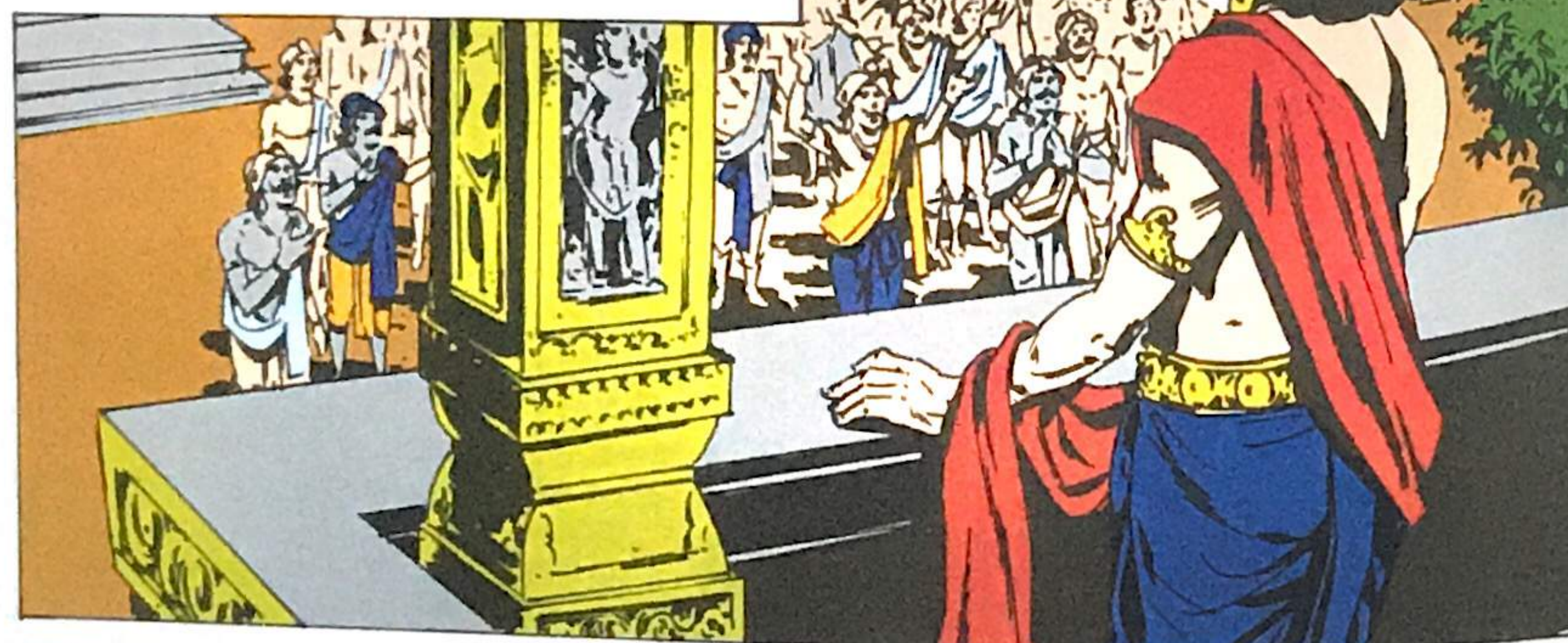
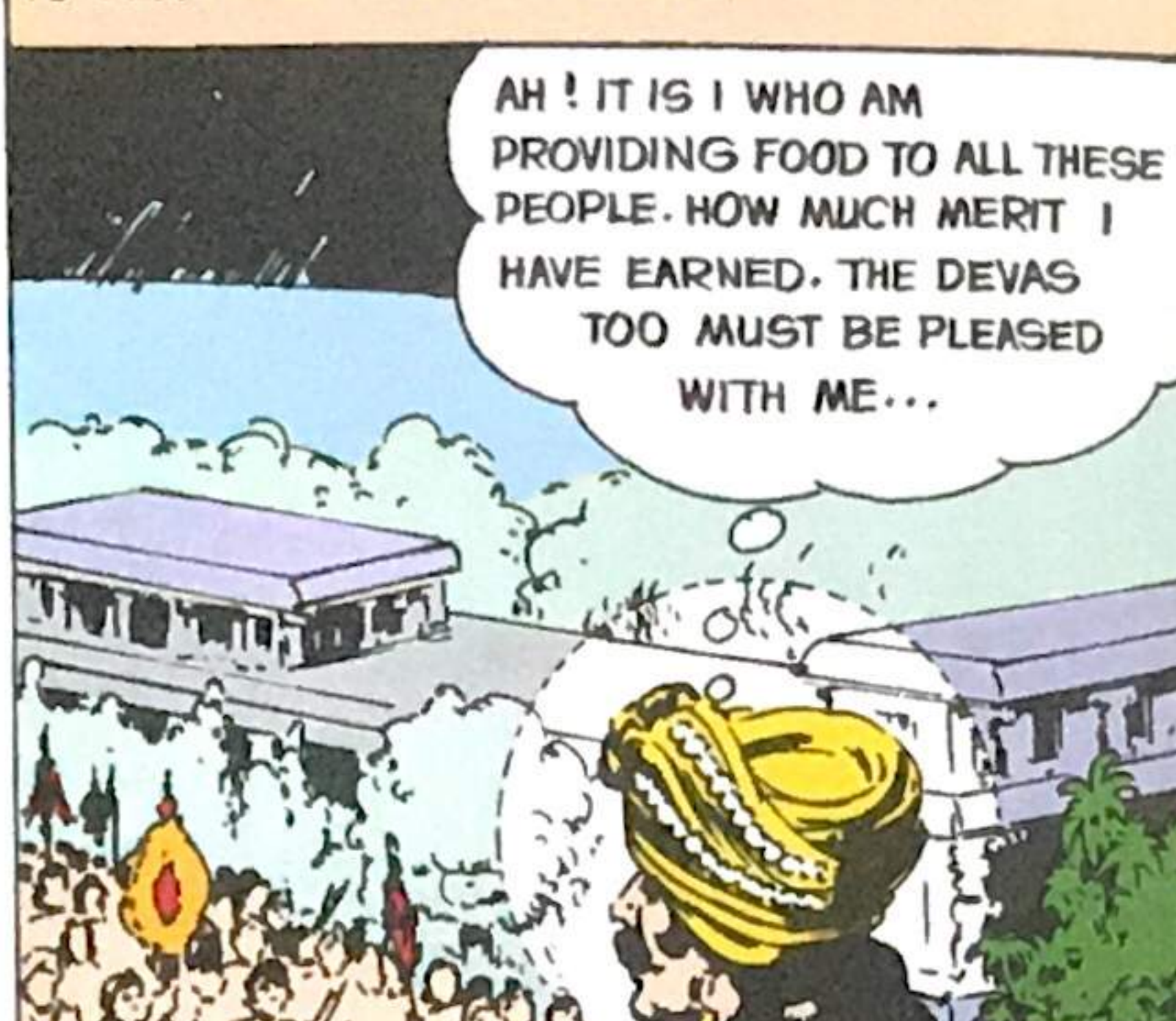
HE ALSO BUILT HOSPITALS AND HOMES TO CARE FOR THE SICK, THE NEEDY AND THE AGEING.



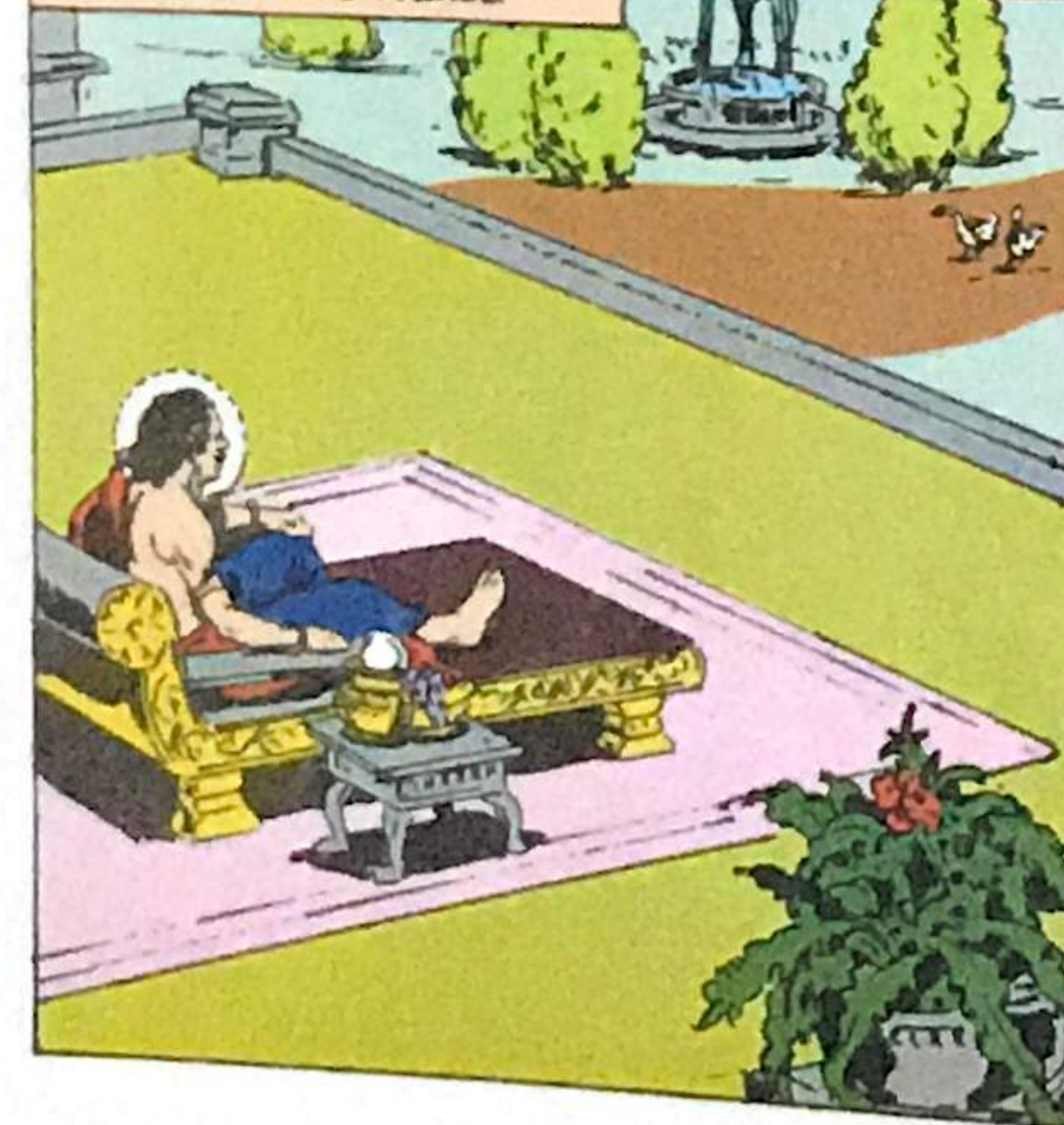
...AND HE TAXED HIS SUBJECTS FAIRLY. QUITE NATURALLY JANASHRUTI WAS PLEASED WITH HIMSELF FOR HAVING DONE SO MUCH FOR HIS KINGDOM.



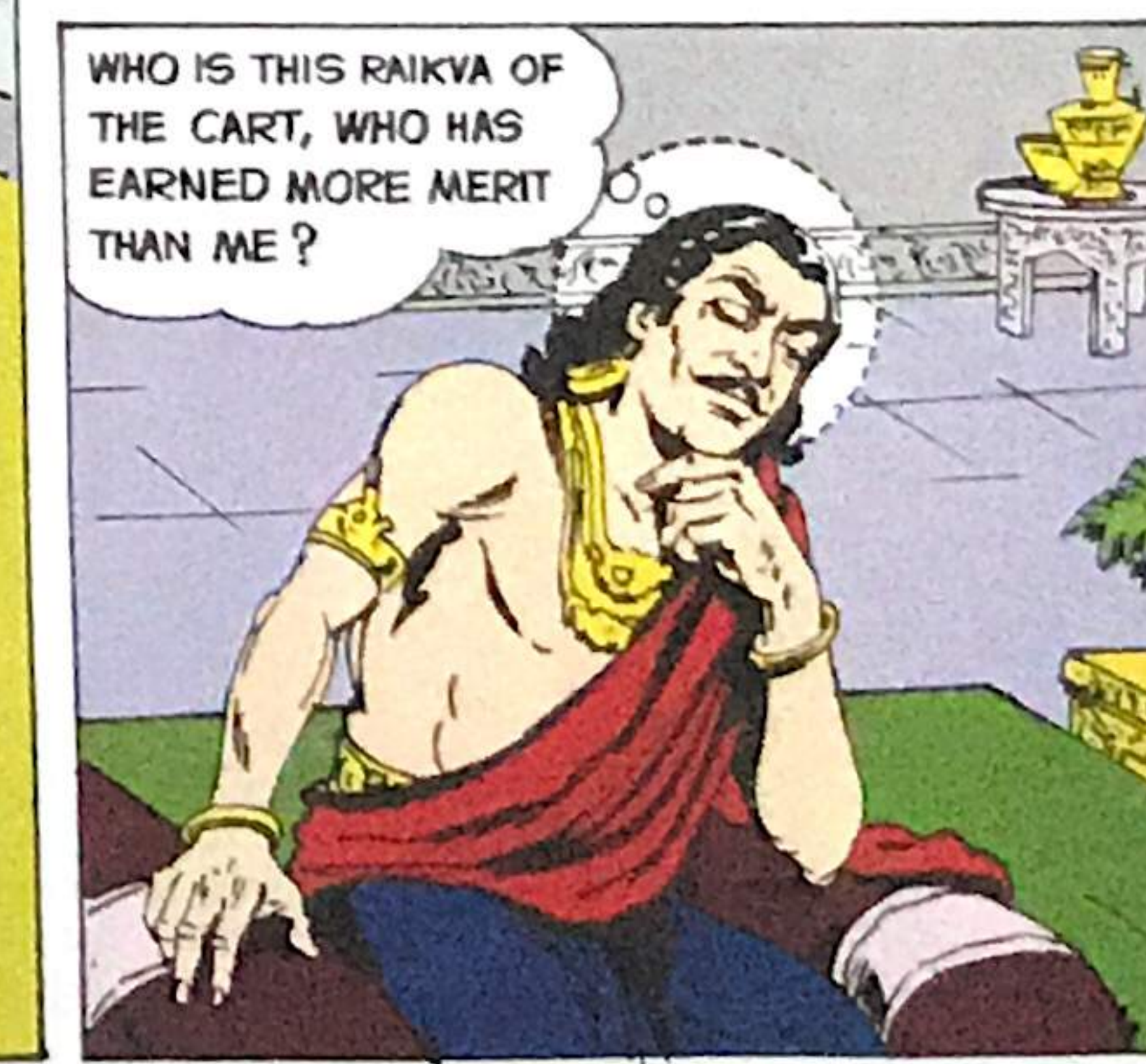
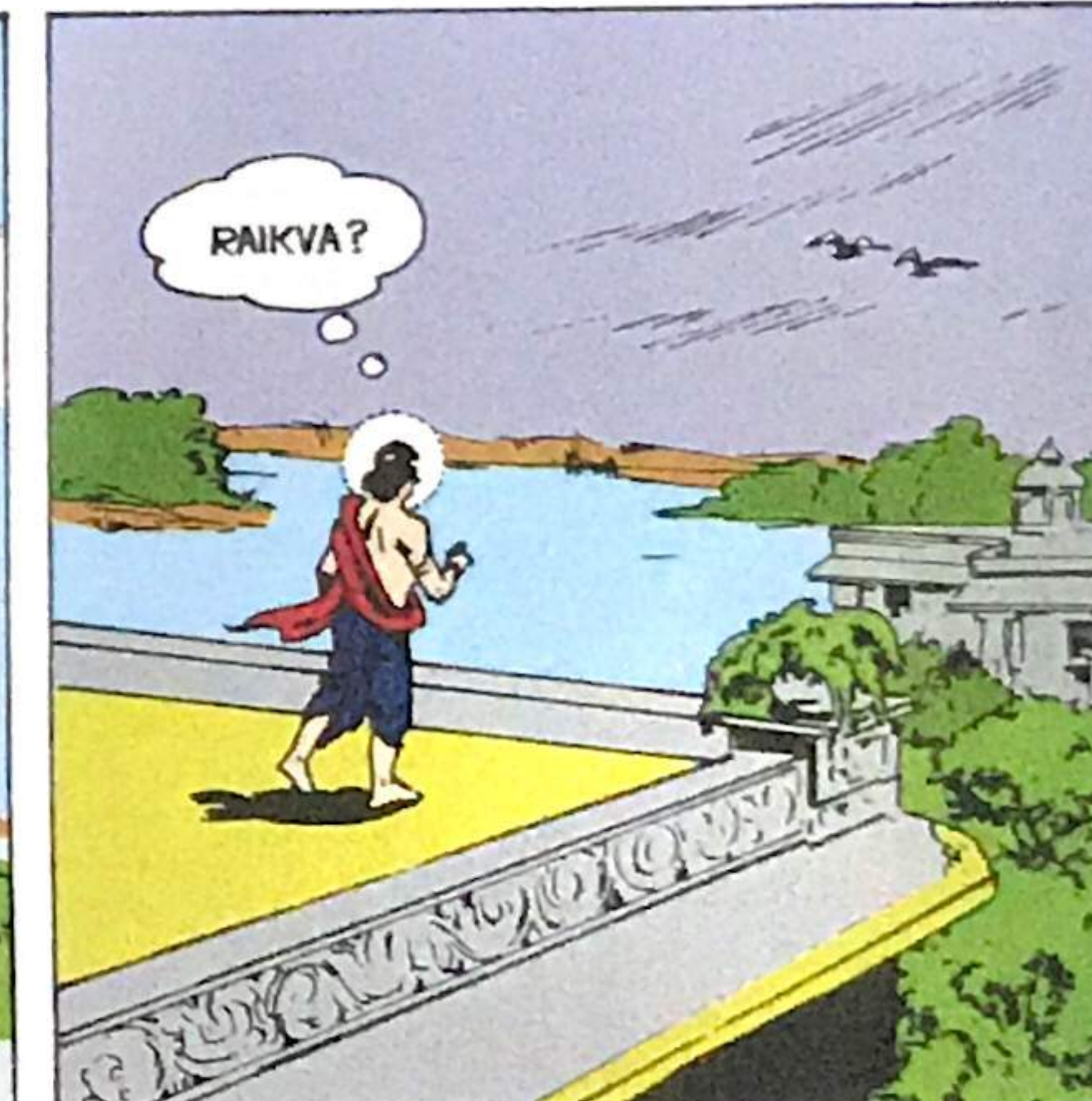
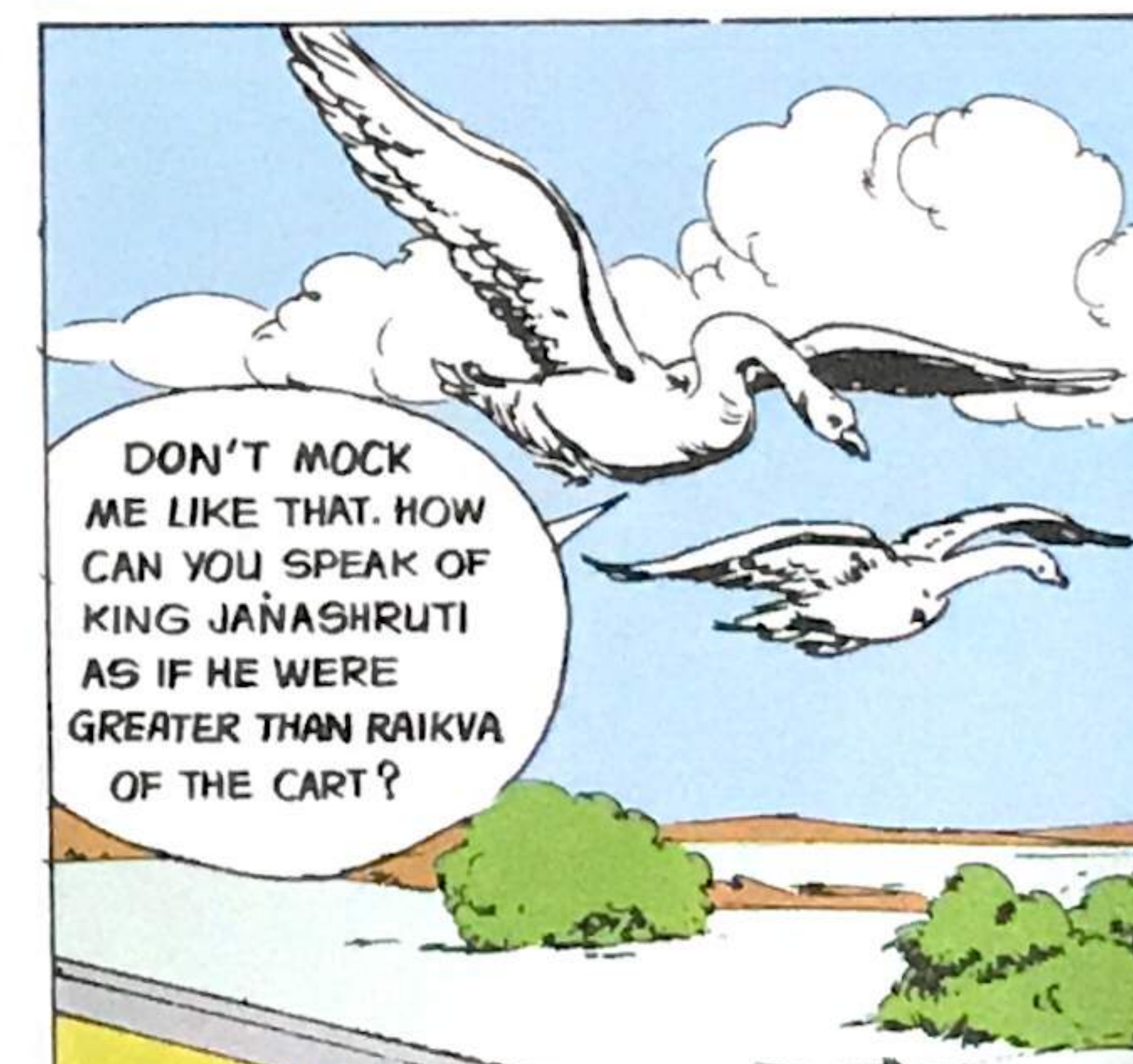
HIS FAME SPREAD FAR BEYOND THE BORDERS OF MAHAVRASHA. UNFORTUNATELY IT DID NOT TAKE LONG TO TURN HIM INTO A VAIN MAN.



ONE EVENING WHILE HE WAS RELAXING ON THE TERRACE OF HIS PALACE—



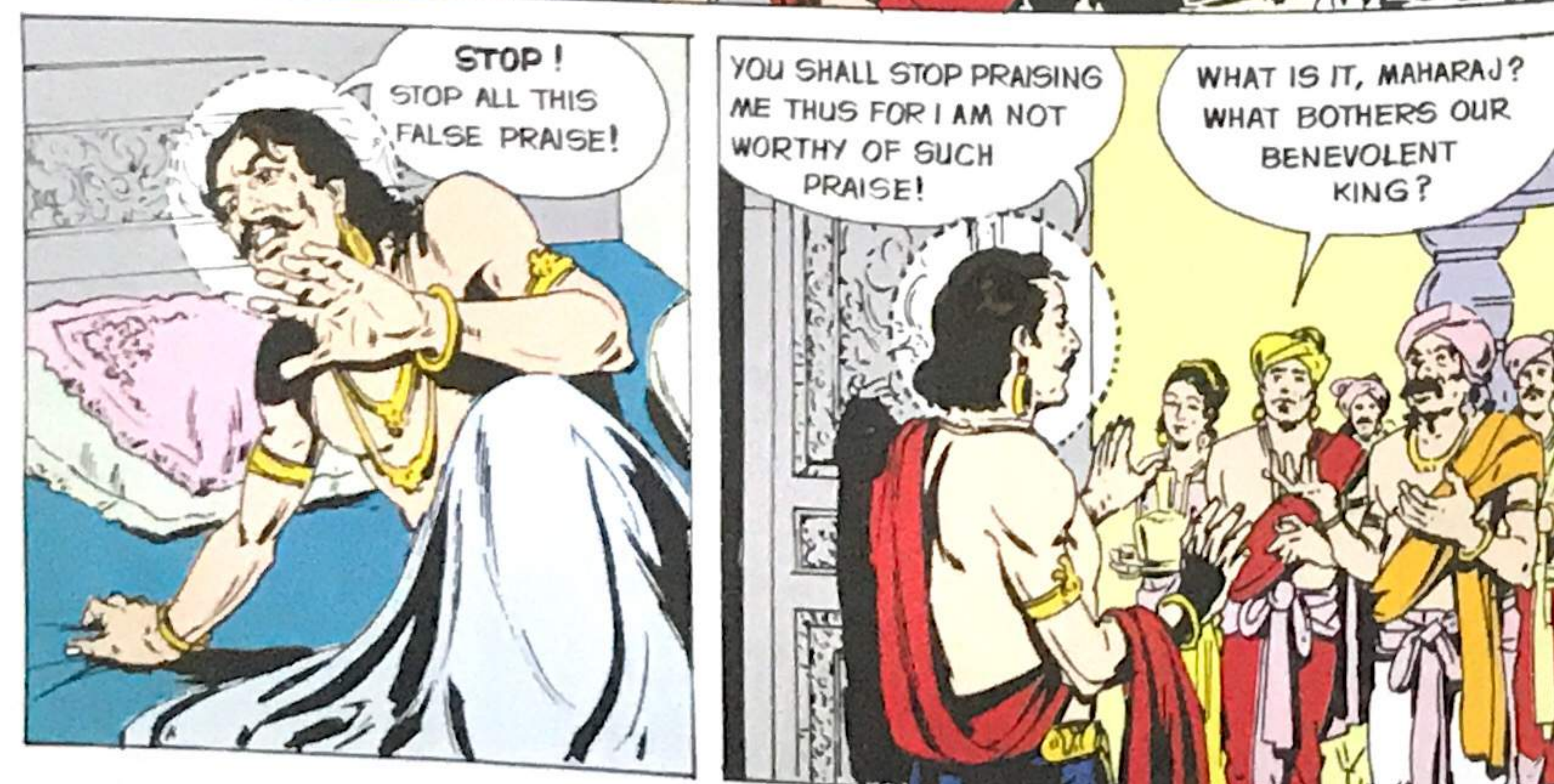
JUST THEN—



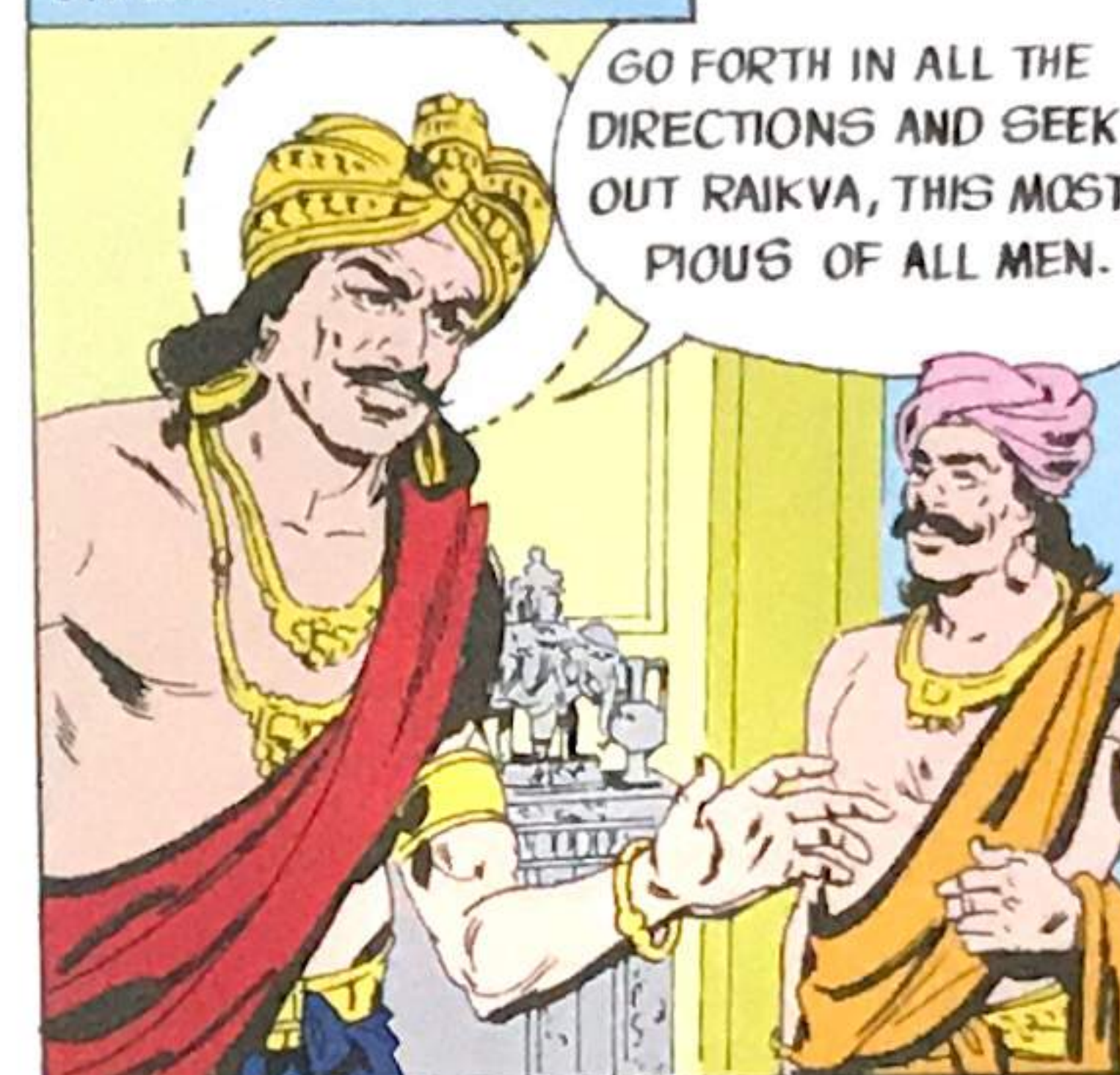
JANASHRUTI FELT RESTLESS THAT NIGHT.



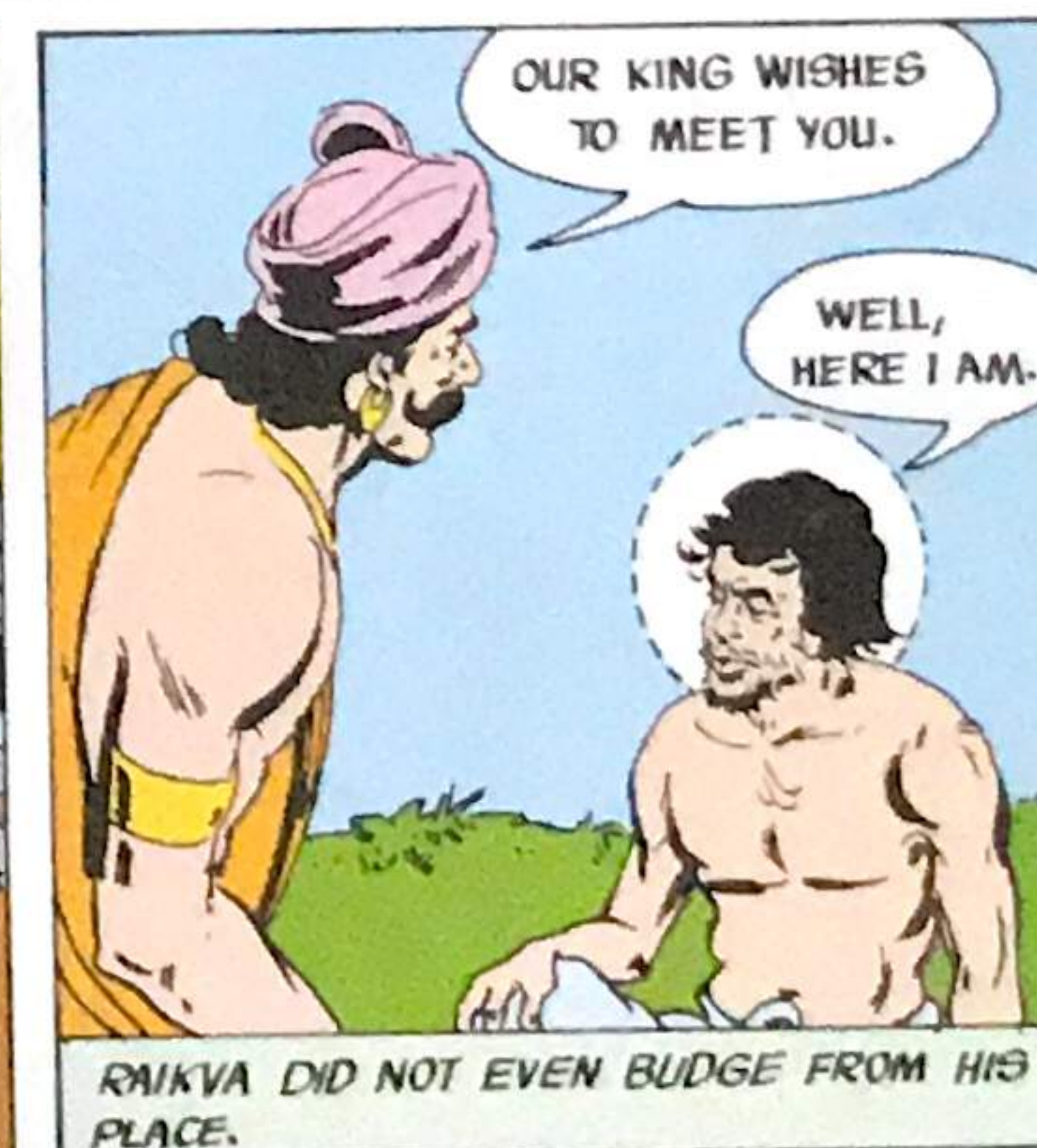
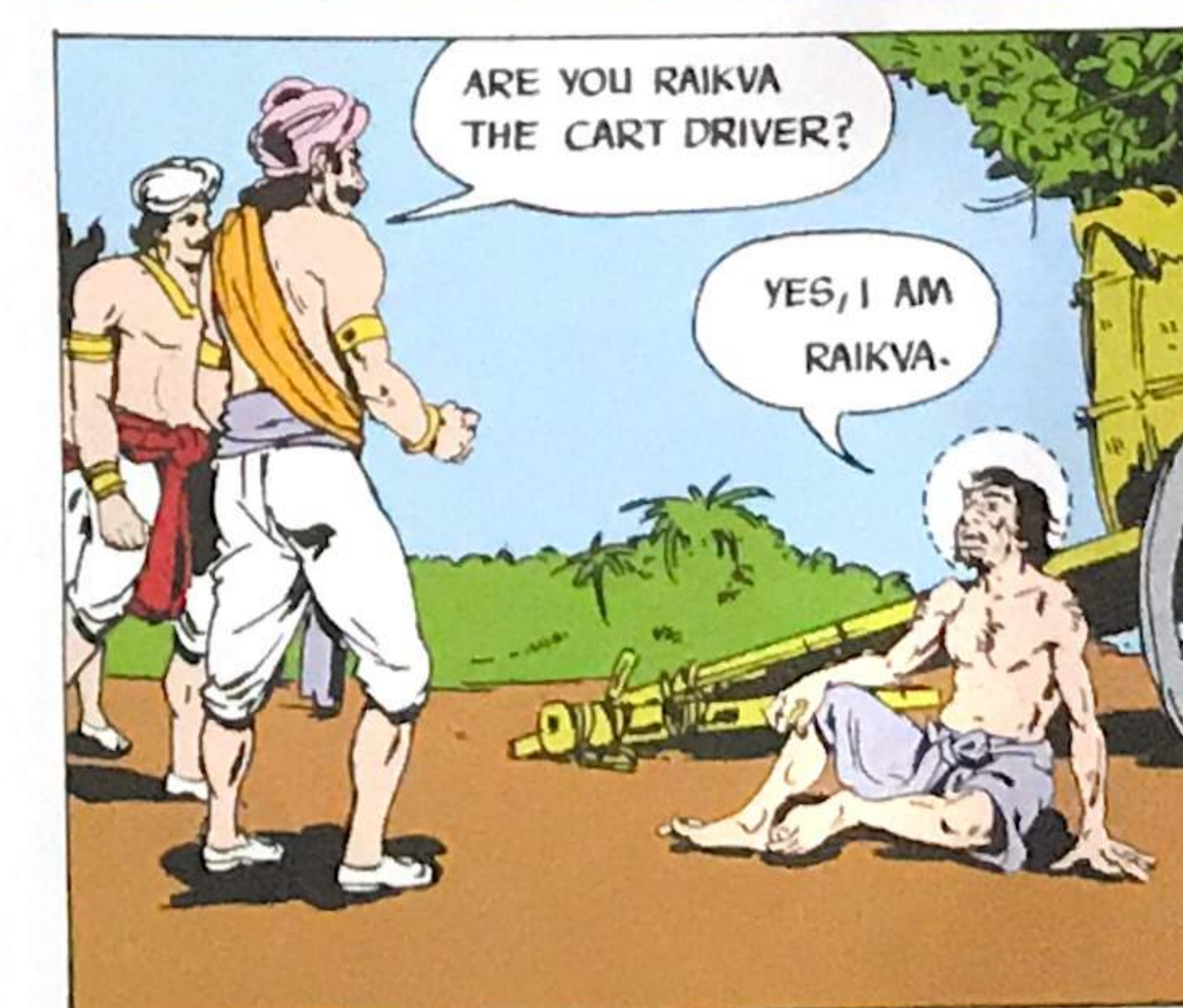
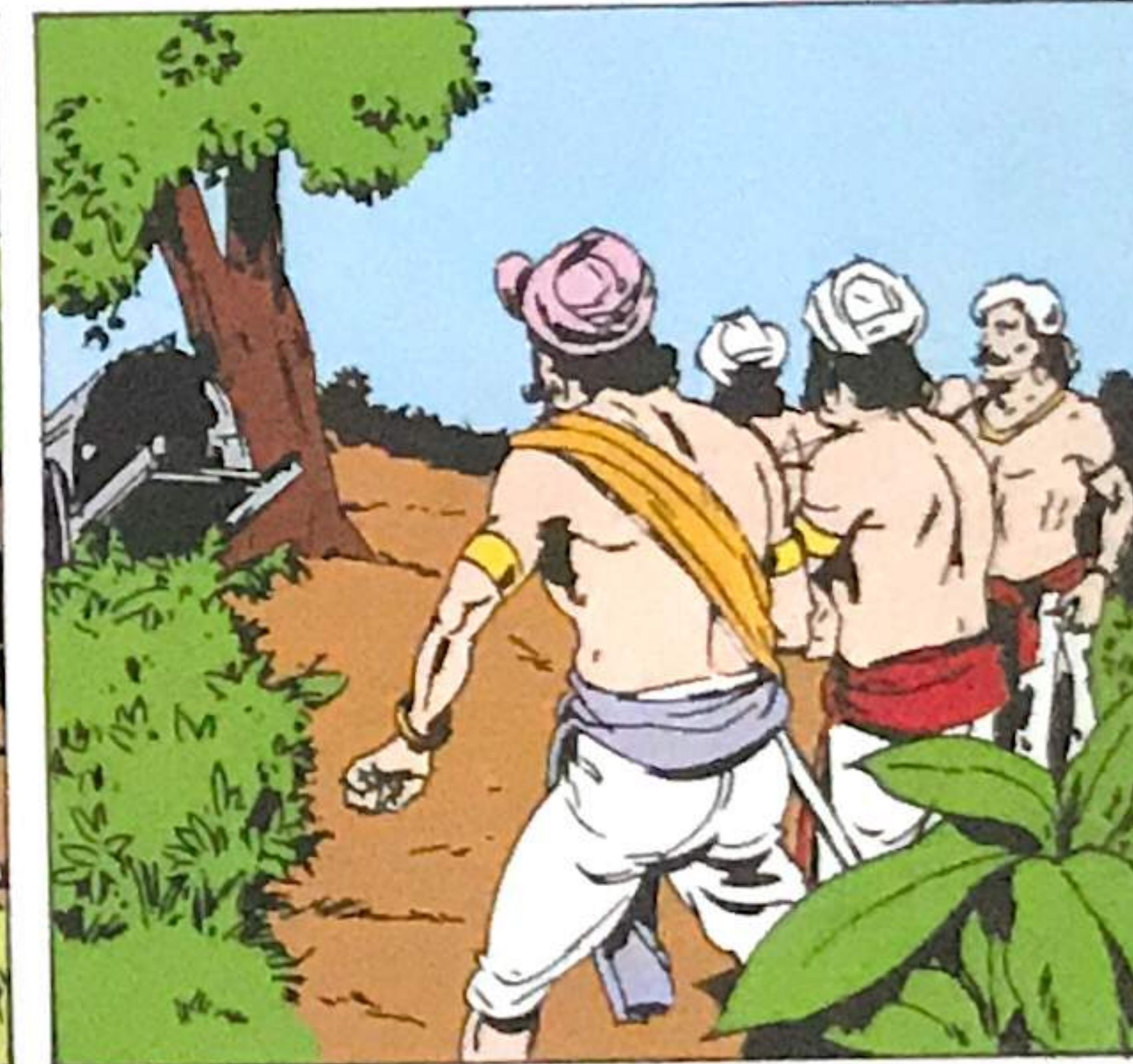
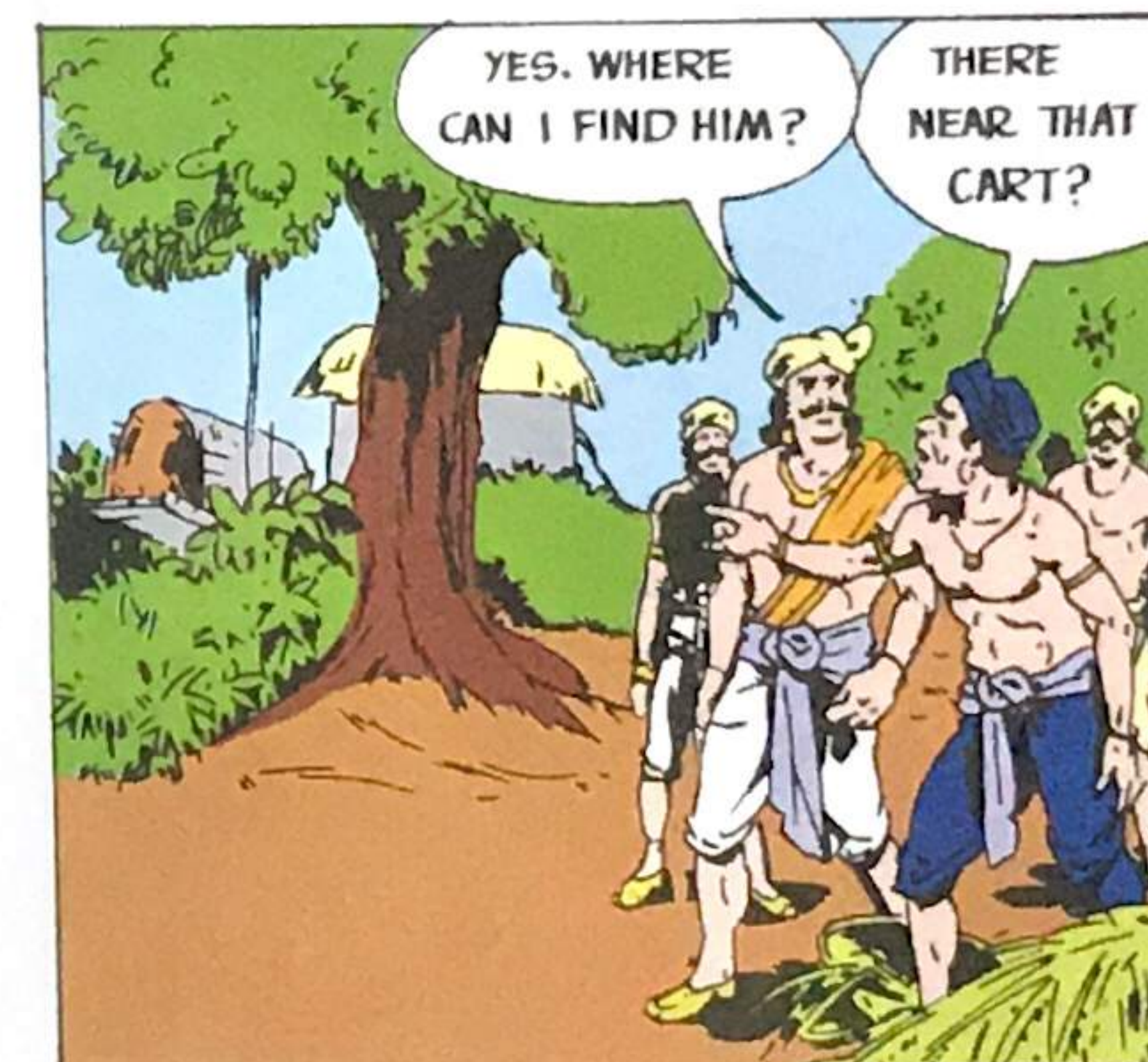
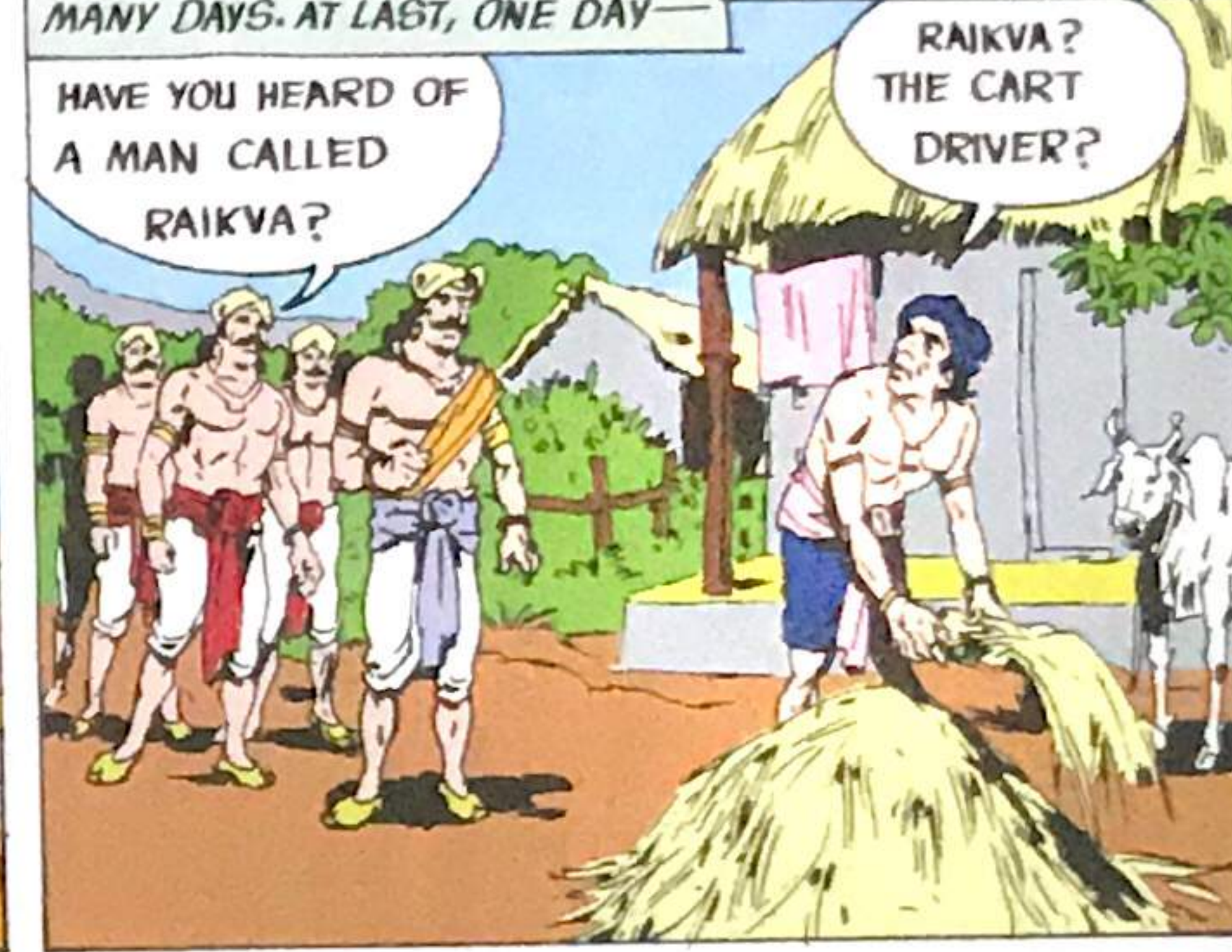
EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, THE ELABORATE RITUAL TO WAKE UP THE ROYAL PERSONAGE BEGAN —

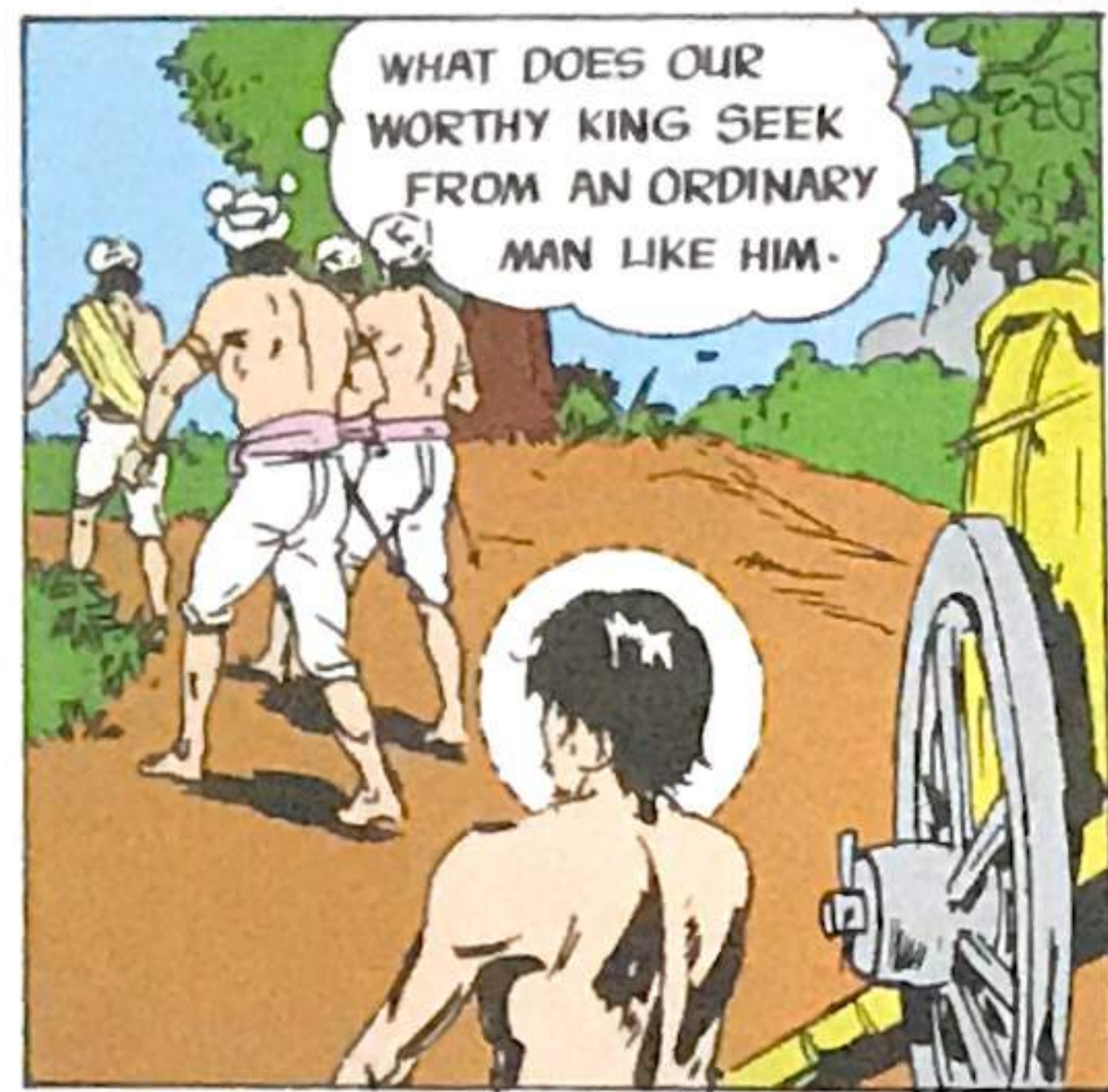


JANASHRUTI TOLD THE BARD ALL ABOUT THE SWANS' CONVERSATION.

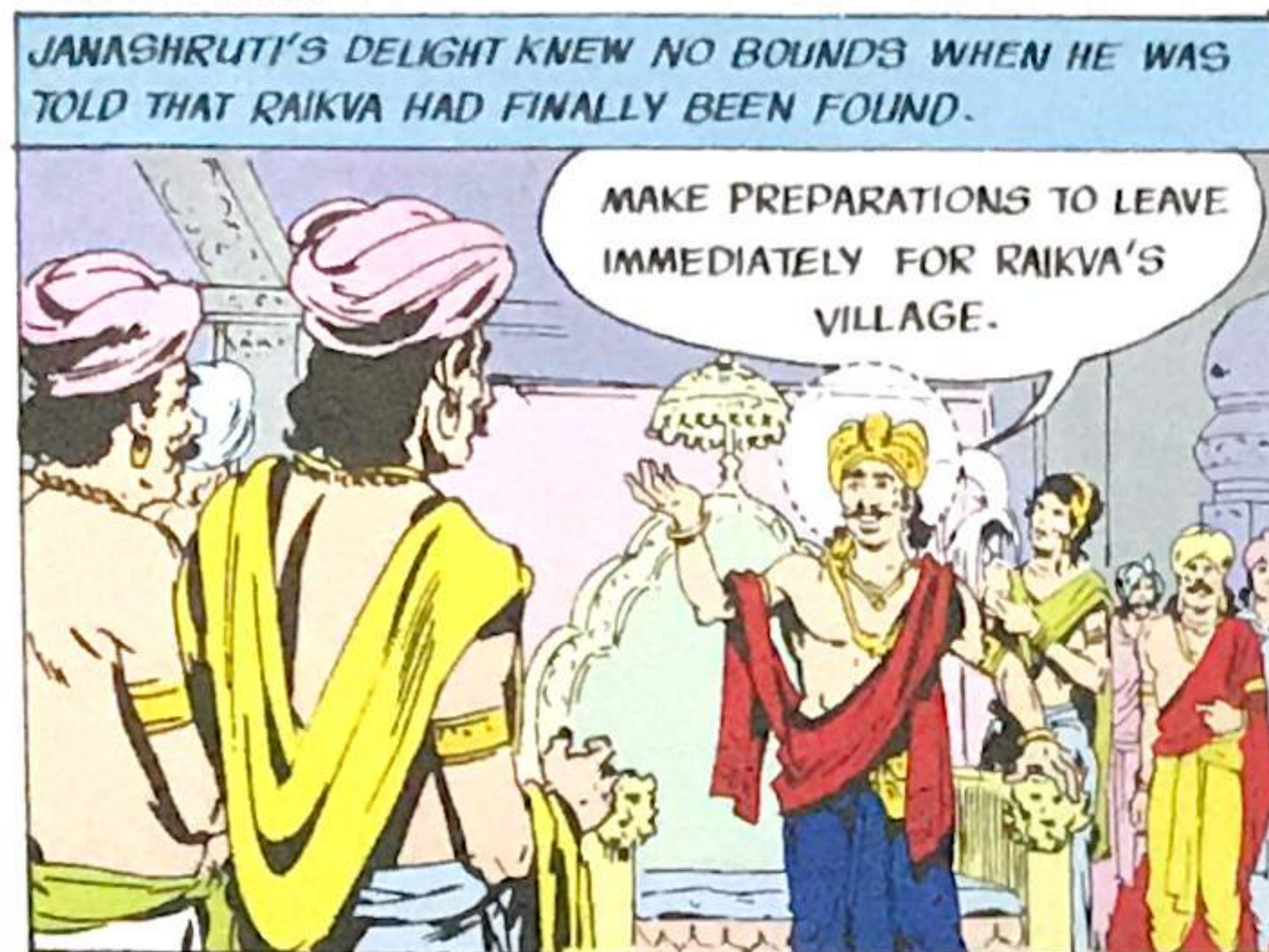


A MASSIVE SEARCH WAS SOON LAUNCHED TO LOCATE RAIKVA. THE KING'S MEN COMBED THE KINGDOM FOR MANY DAYS. AT LAST, ONE DAY —





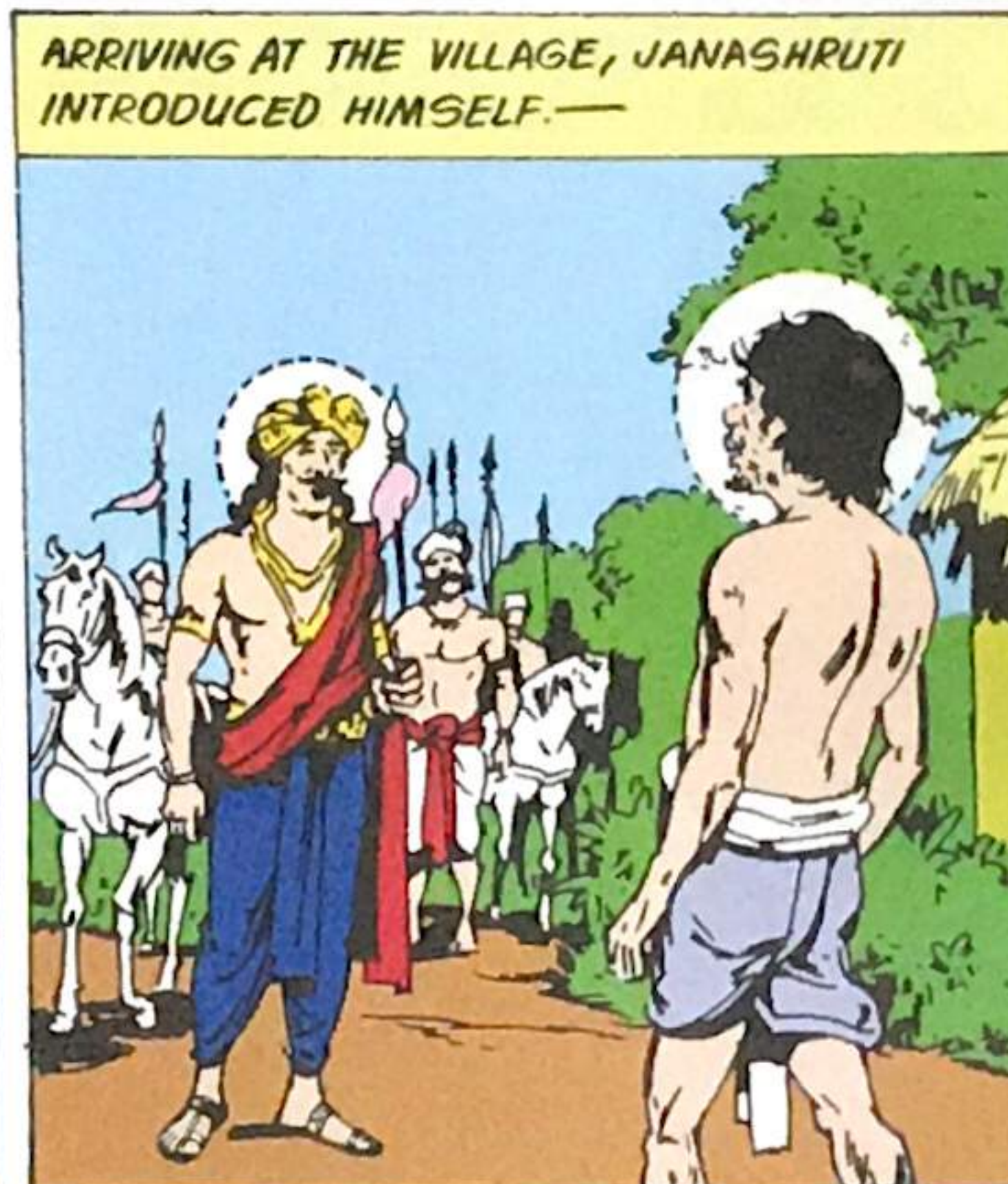
WHAT DOES OUR WORTHY KING SEEK FROM AN ORDINARY MAN LIKE HIM.



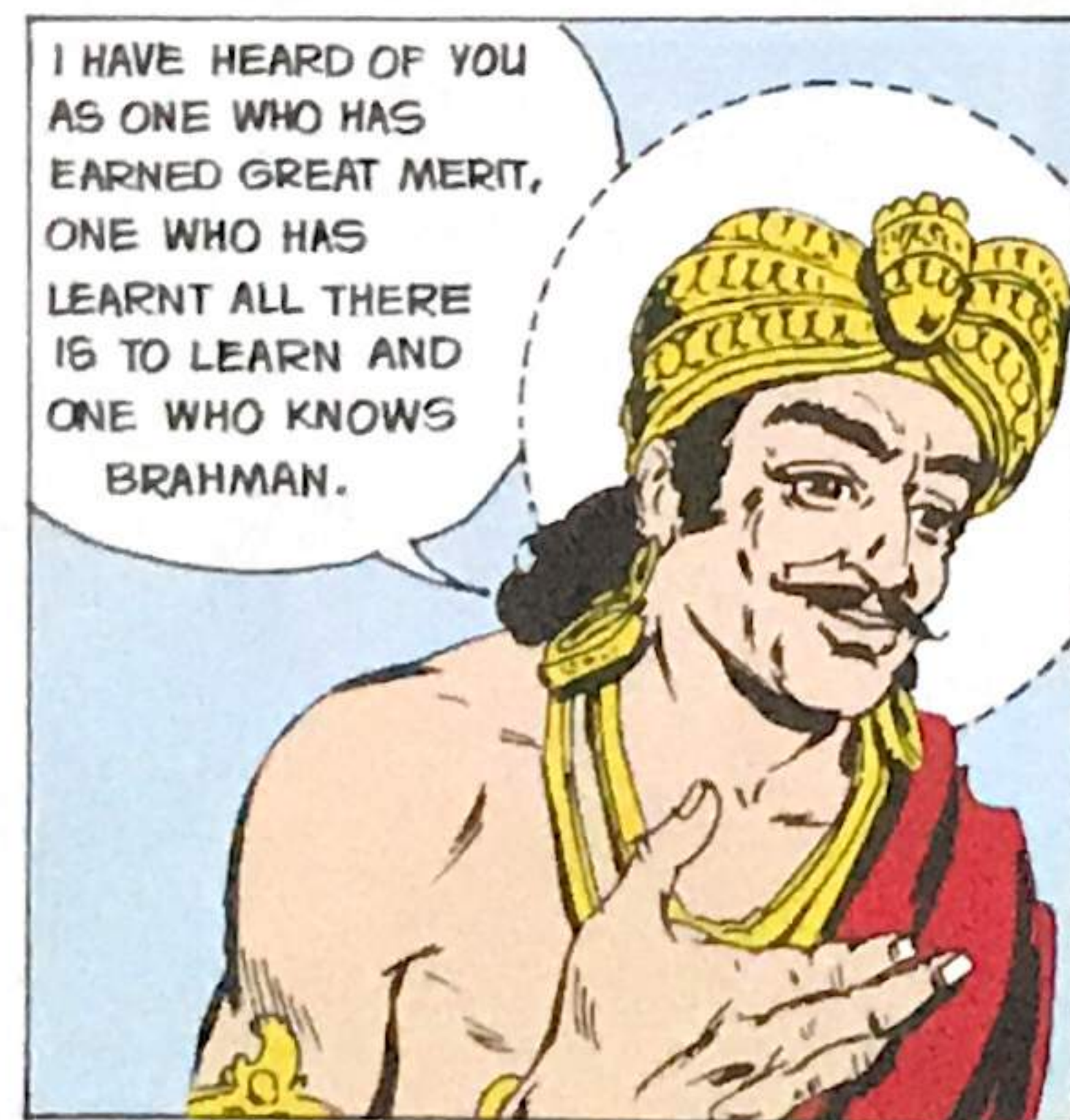
JANASHRUTI'S DELIGHT KNEW NO BOUNDS WHEN HE WAS TOLD THAT RAIKVA HAD FINALLY BEEN FOUND.

MAKE PREPARATIONS TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY FOR RAIKVA'S VILLAGE.

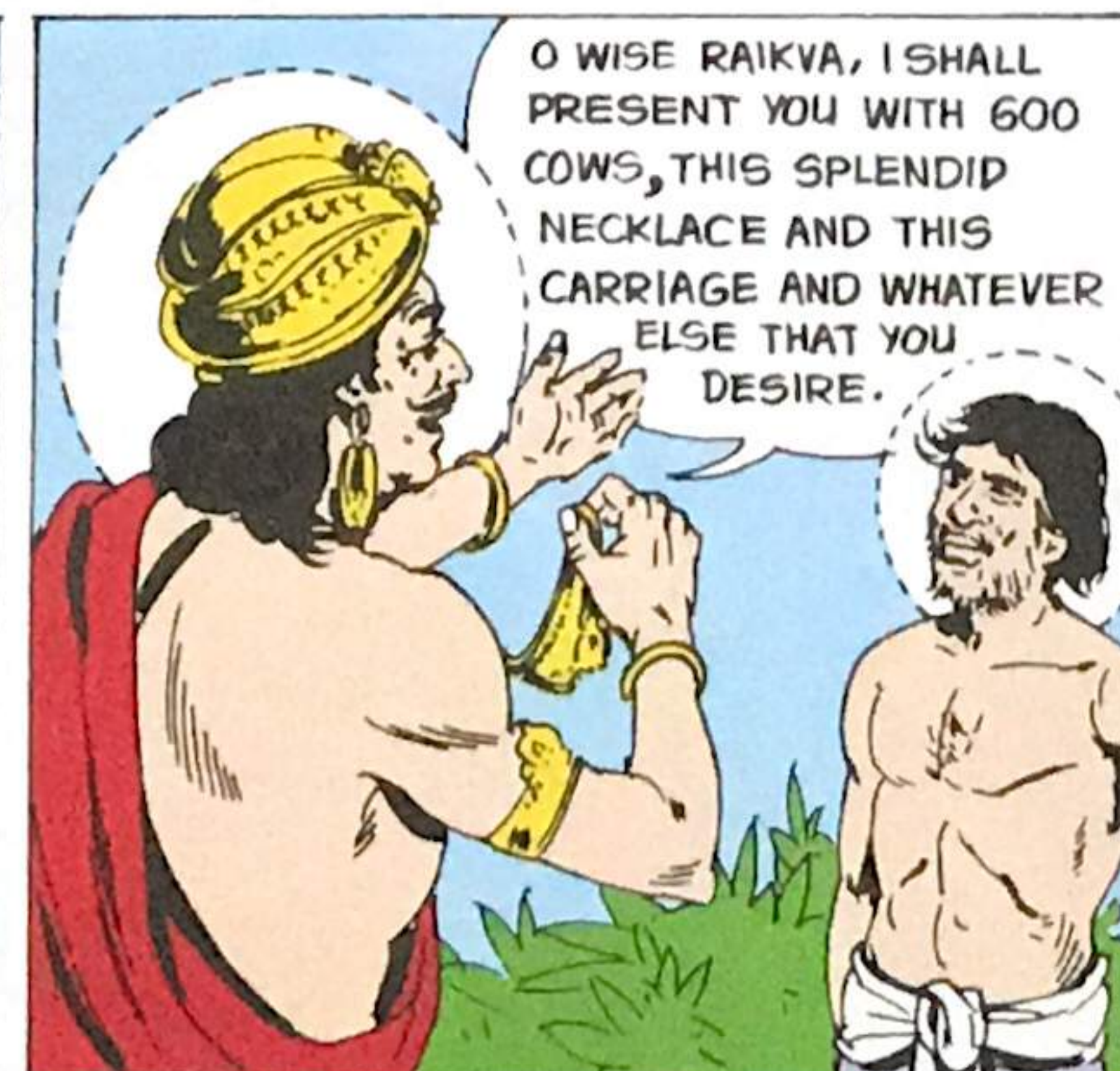
NEXT MORNING, JANASHRUTI STARTED FOR RAIKVA'S VILLAGE WITH AN ENTOURAGE OF HIS MEN. HE TOOK WITH HIM AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF 600 COWS, A GOLD NECKLACE AND A CARRIAGE AS A GIFT TO RAIKVA.



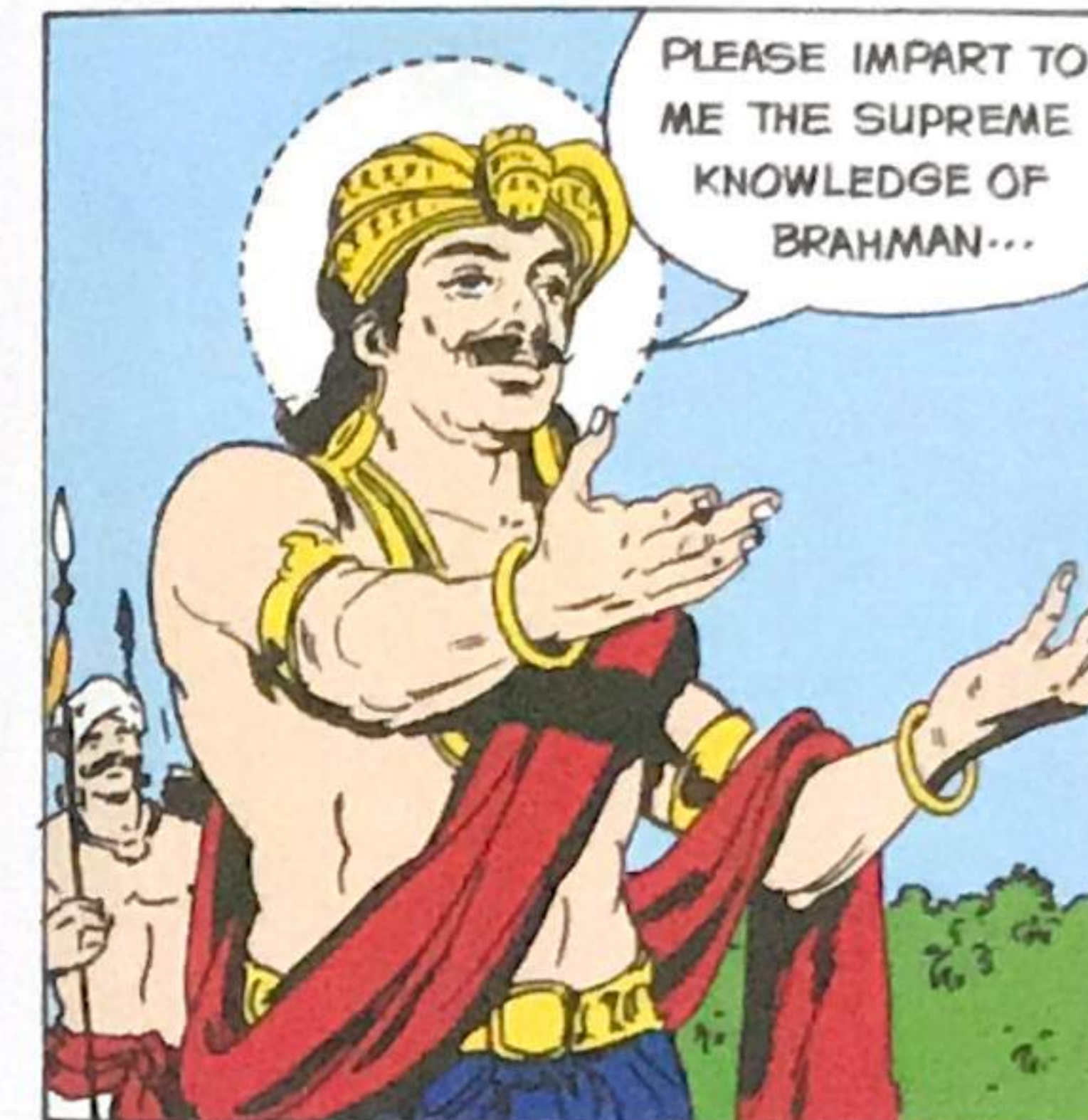
ARRIVING AT THE VILLAGE, JANASHRUTI INTRODUCED HIMSELF.



I HAVE HEARD OF YOU AS ONE WHO HAS EARNED GREAT MERIT, ONE WHO HAS LEARNT ALL THERE IS TO LEARN AND ONE WHO KNOWS BRAHMAN.



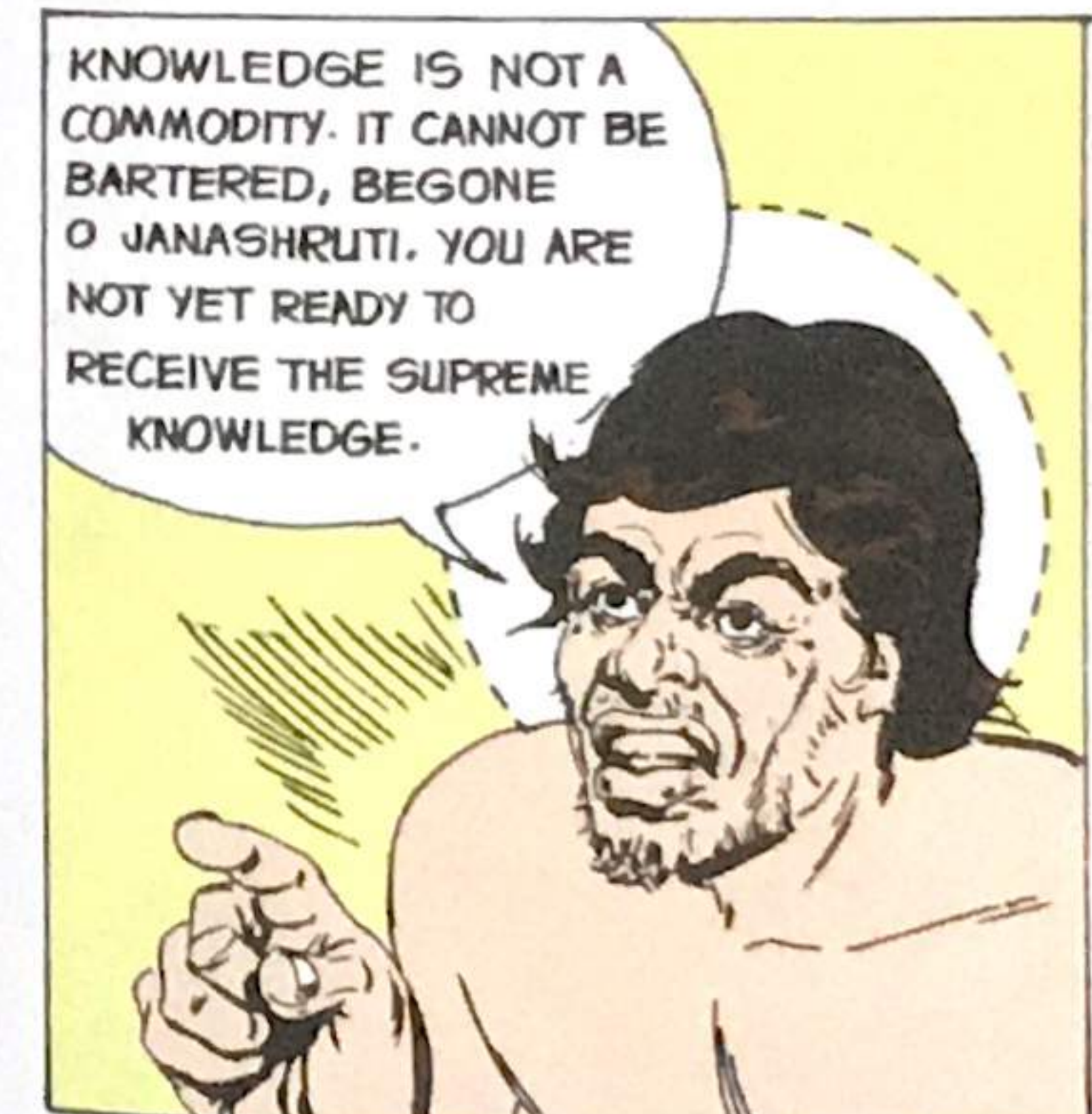
O WISE RAIKVA, I SHALL PRESENT YOU WITH 600 COWS, THIS SPLENDID NECKLACE AND THIS CARRIAGE AND WHATEVER ELSE THAT YOU DESIRE.



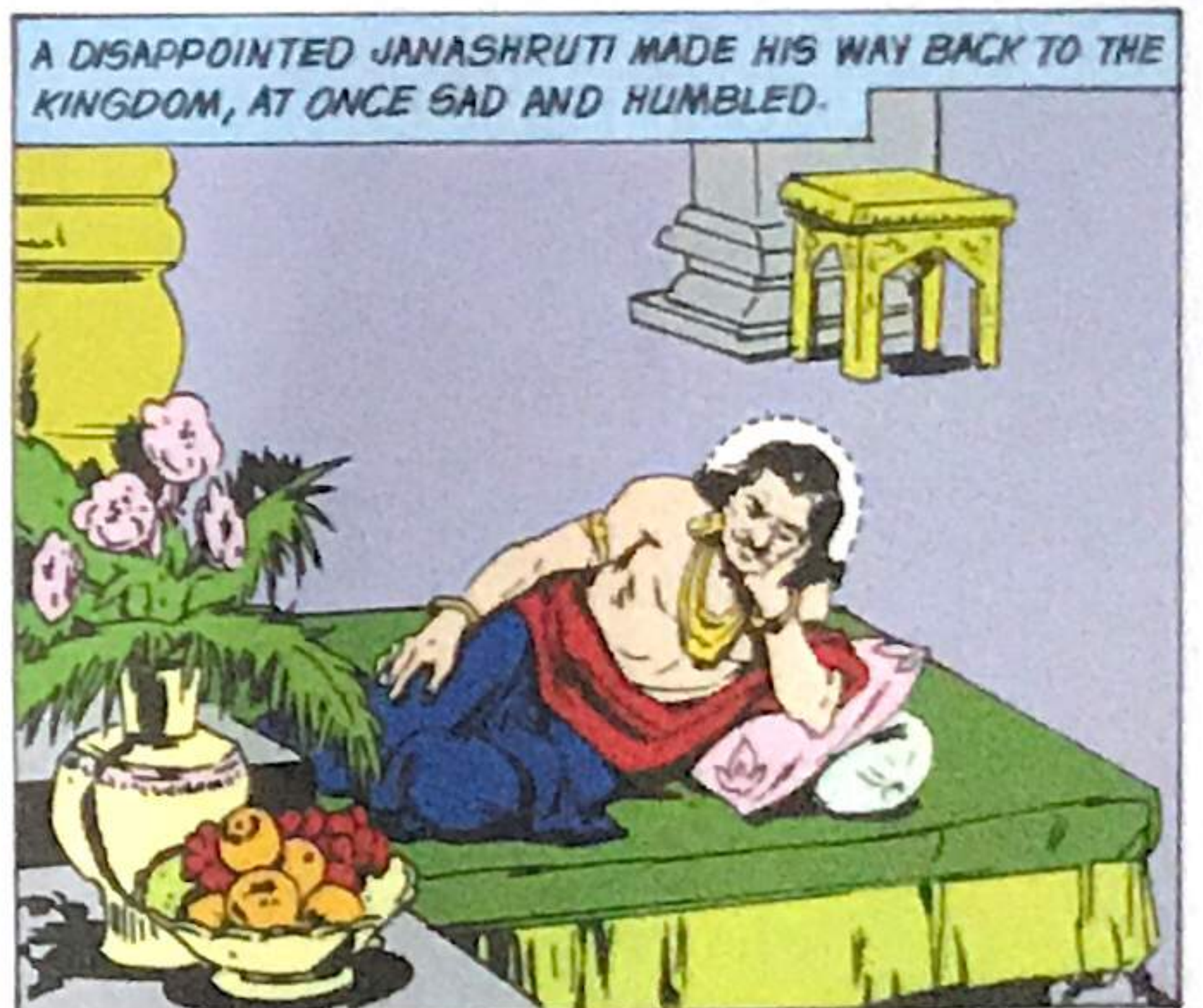
PLEASE IMPART TO ME THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN...



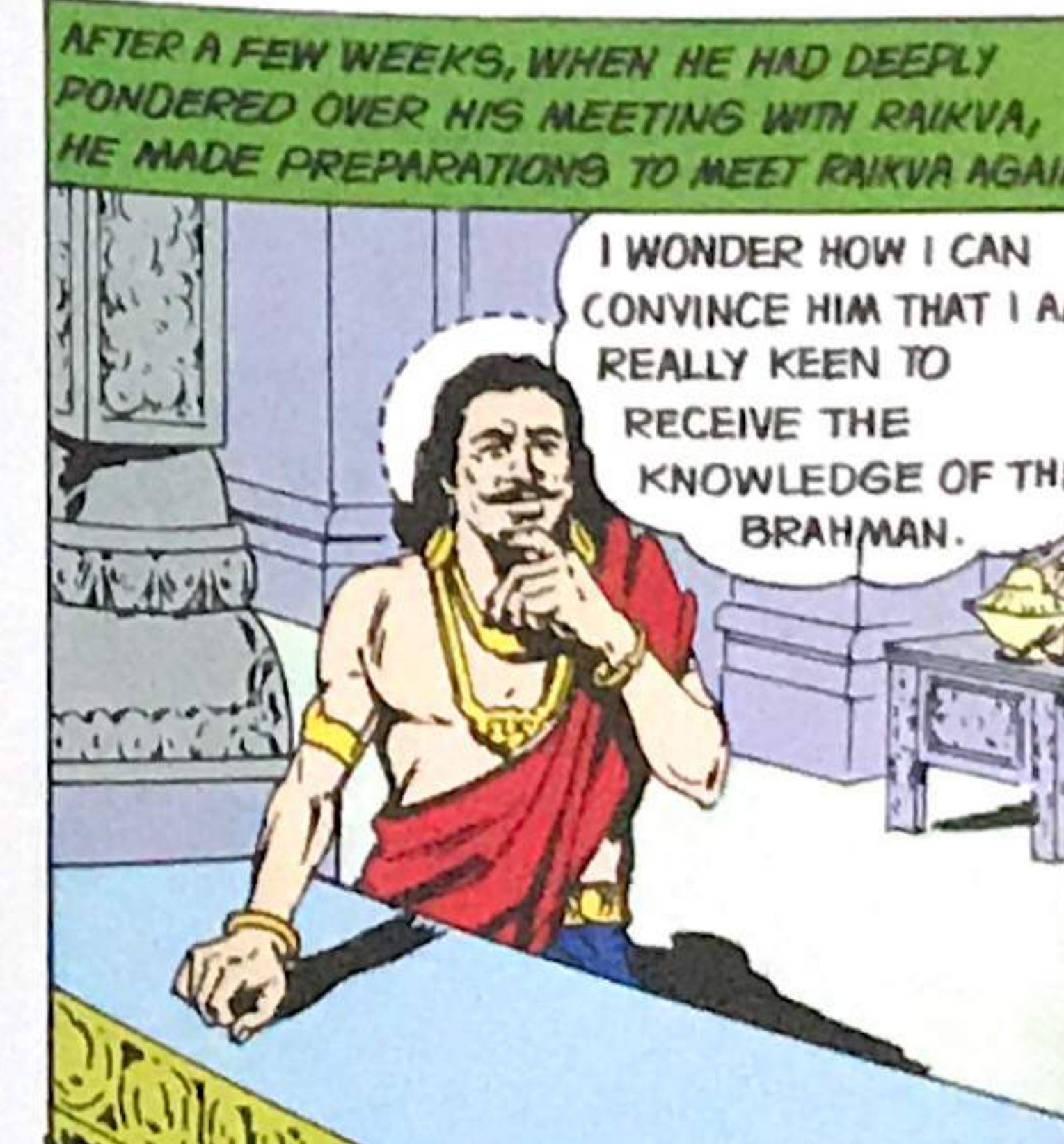
O IGNORANT KING! THE KNOWLEDGE OF BRAHMAN CANNOT BE PURCHASED.



KNOWLEDGE IS NOT A COMMODITY. IT CANNOT BE BARTERED, BEGONE O JANASHRUTI. YOU ARE NOT YET READY TO RECEIVE THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE.

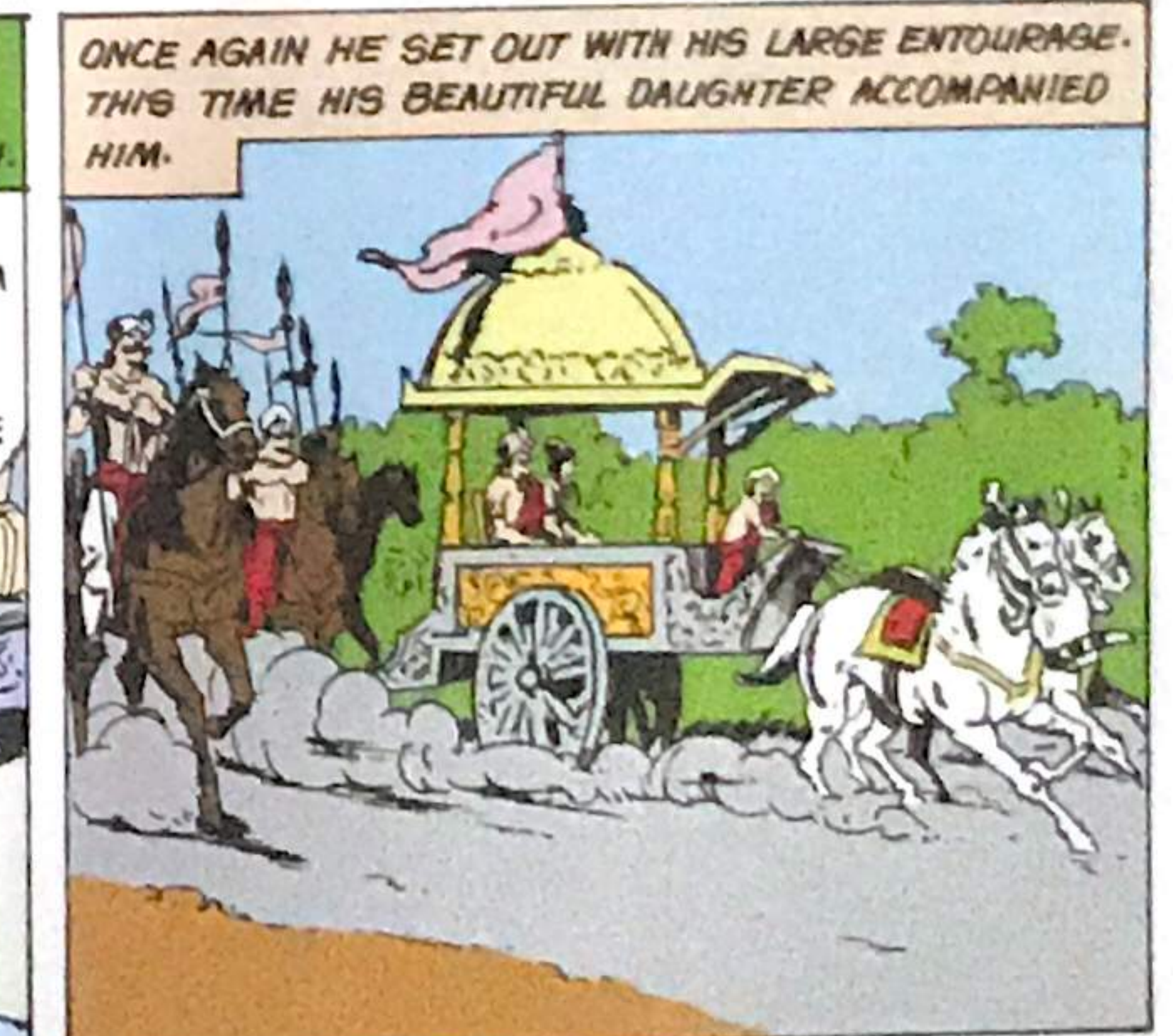


A DISAPPOINTED JANASHRUTI MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE KINGDOM, AT ONCE SAD AND HUMBLER.



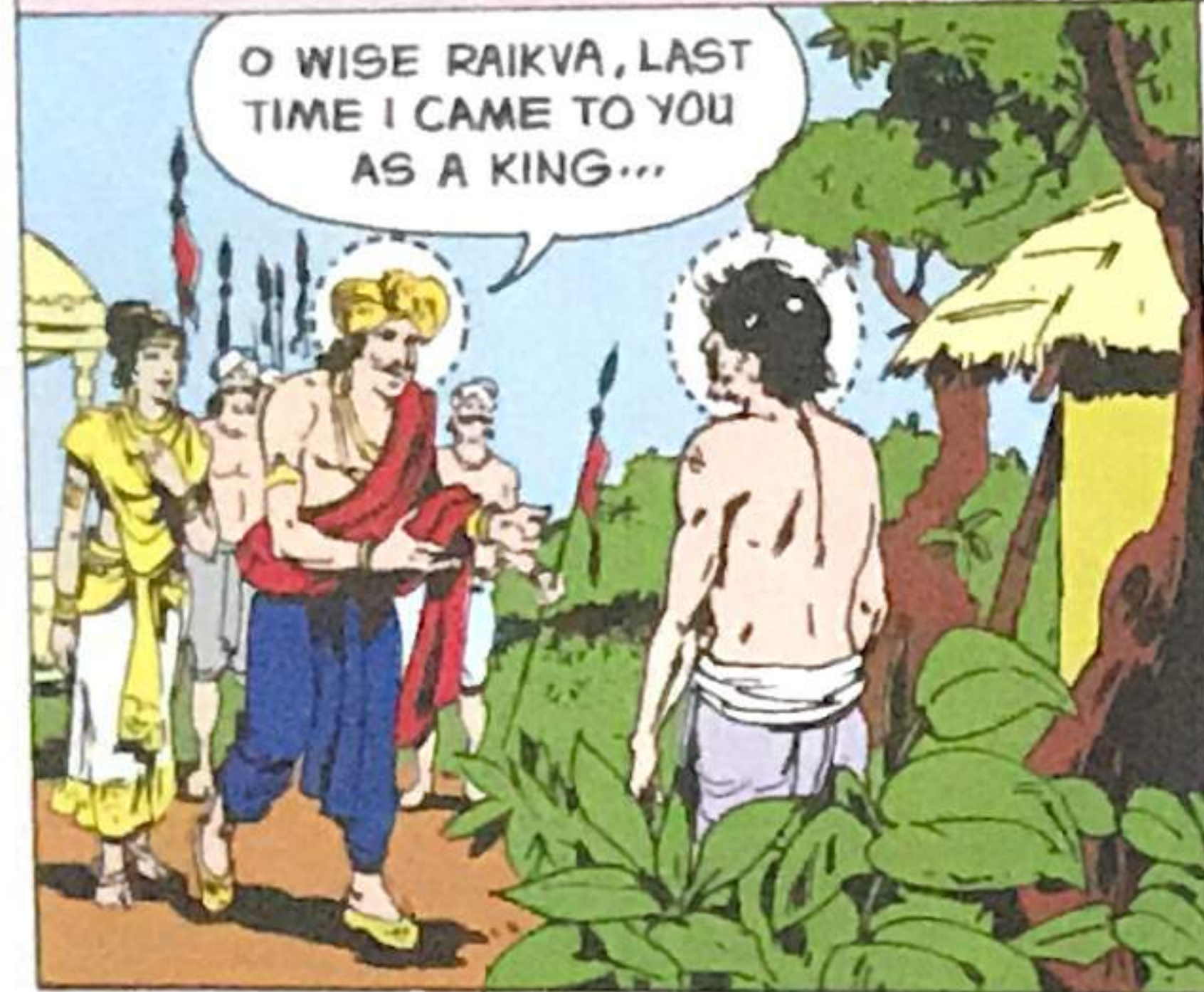
AFTER A FEW WEEKS, WHEN HE HAD DEEPLY PONDERED OVER HIS MEETING WITH RAIKVA, HE MADE PREPARATIONS TO MEET RAIKVA AGAIN.

I WONDER HOW I CAN CONVINCE HIM THAT I AM REALLY KEEN TO RECEIVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE BRAHMAN.



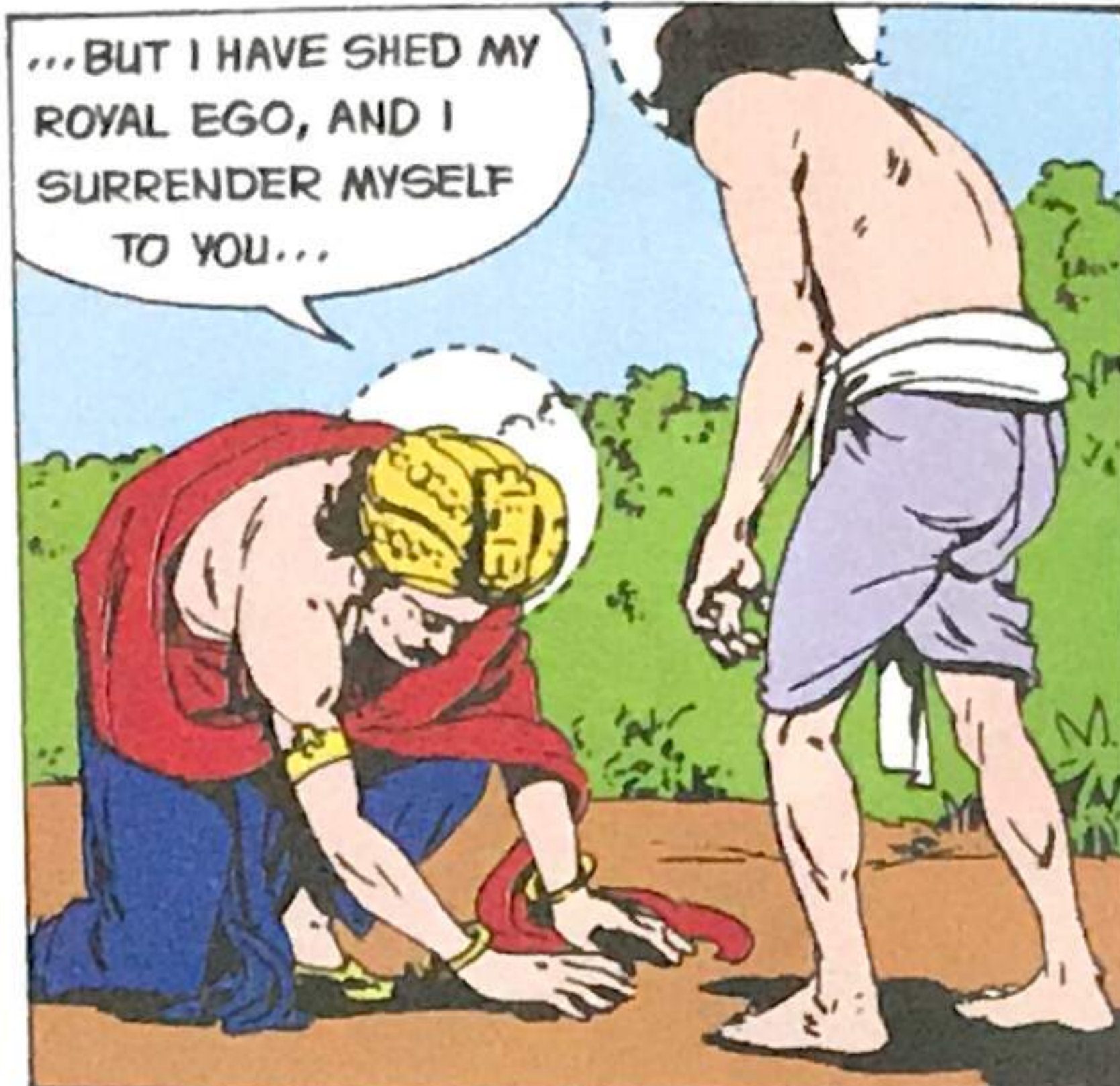
ONCE AGAIN HE SET OUT WITH HIS LARGE ENTOURAGE. THIS TIME HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER ACCOMPANIED HIM.

ON REACHING THE VILLAGE, HE PROSTRATED BEFORE THE WISE RUSTIC.



O WISE RAIKVA, LAST TIME I CAME TO YOU AS A KING...

...BUT I HAVE SHED MY ROYAL EGO, AND I SURRENDER MYSELF TO YOU...



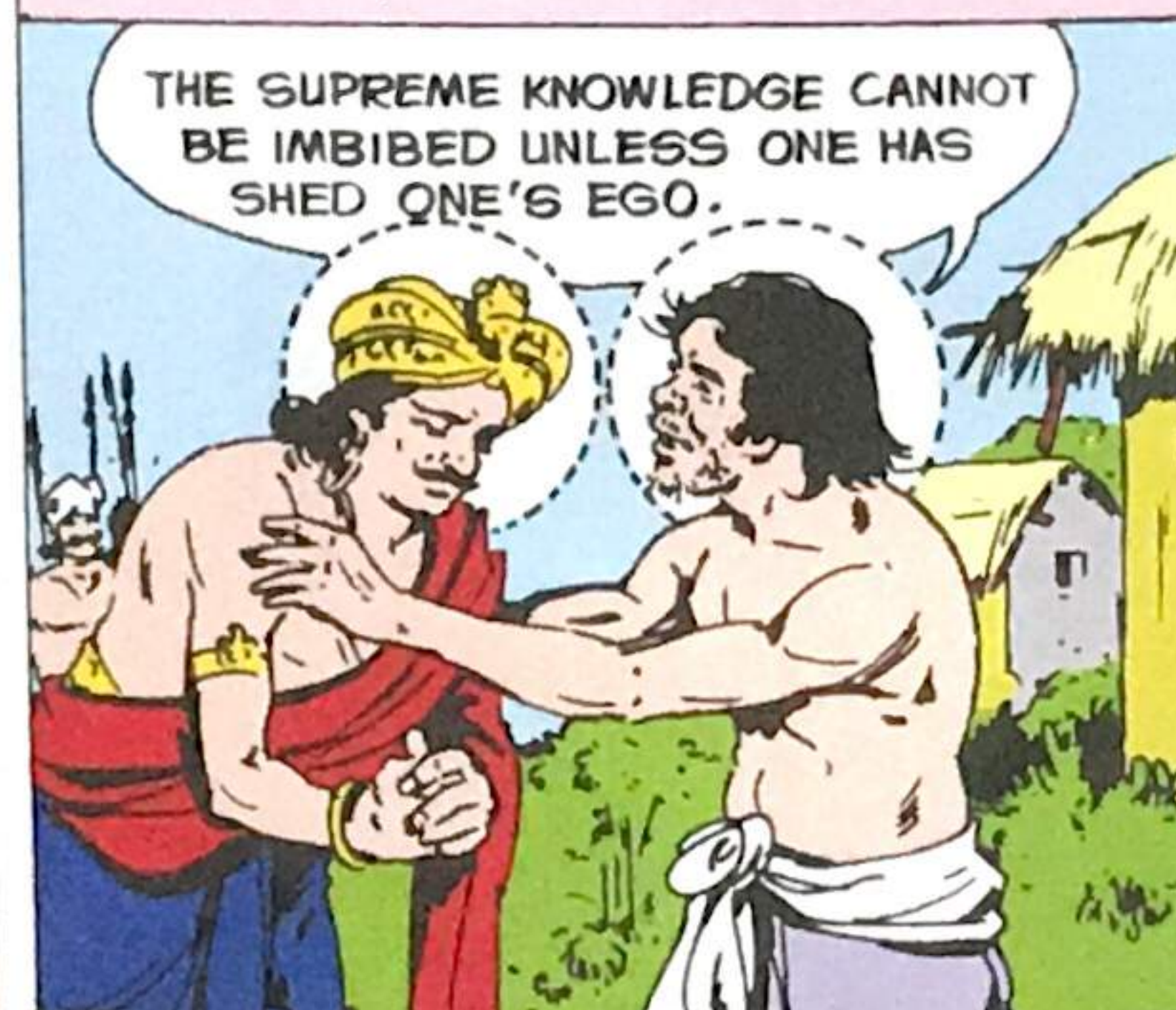
THIS TIME, RAIKVA SAW THAT THE KING HAD LOST ALL HIS VANITY AND THE GENUINE DESIRE FOR KNOWLEDGE WAS EVIDENT FROM HIS EYES.

I BLESS YOU, O VIRTUOUS JANASHRUTI. ALL THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IS MINE SHALL NOW BE YOURS.

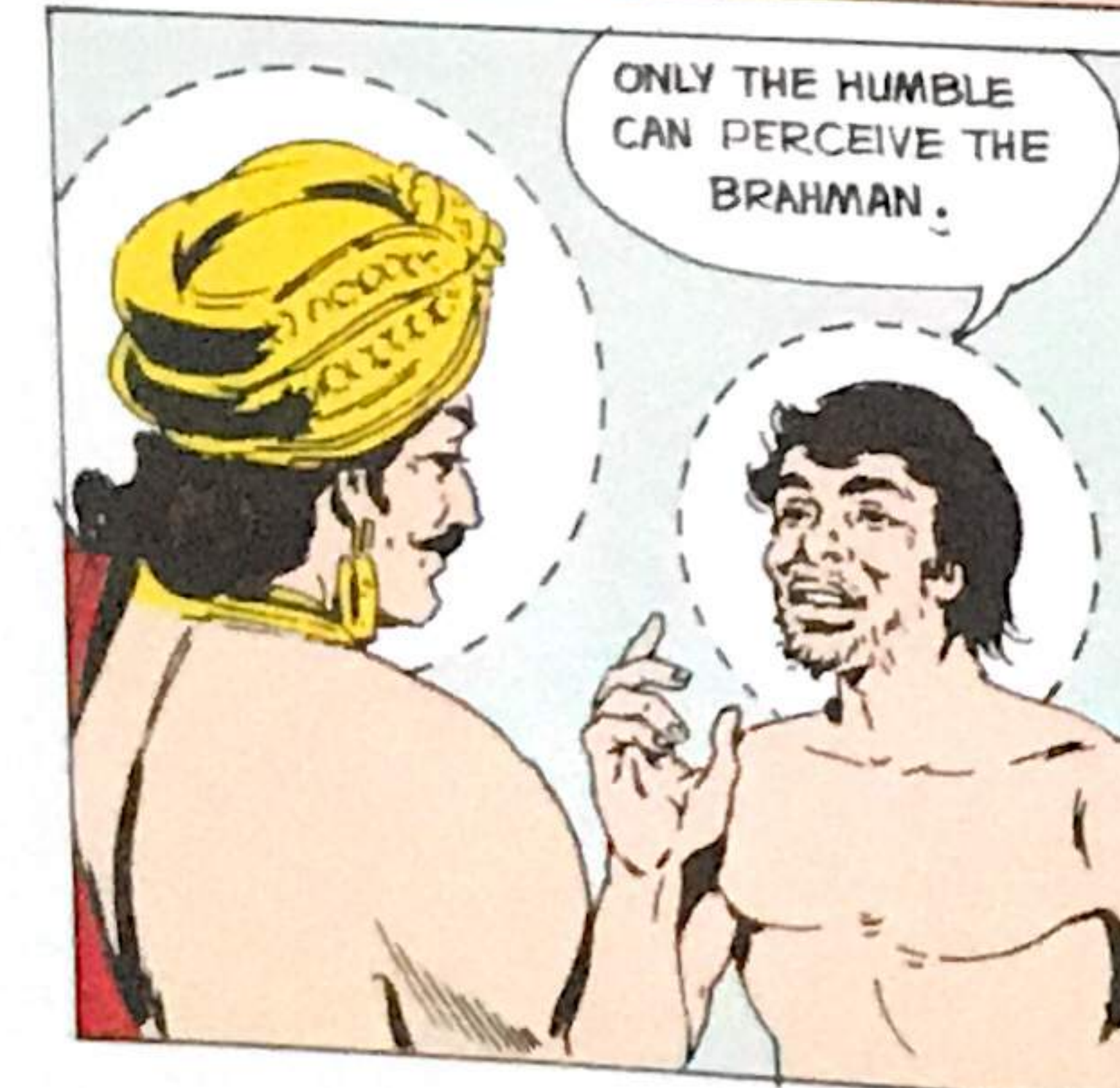


AND THEN RAIKVA, DRAWING JANASHRUTI CLOSE TO HIM, SPOKE AT LENGTH—

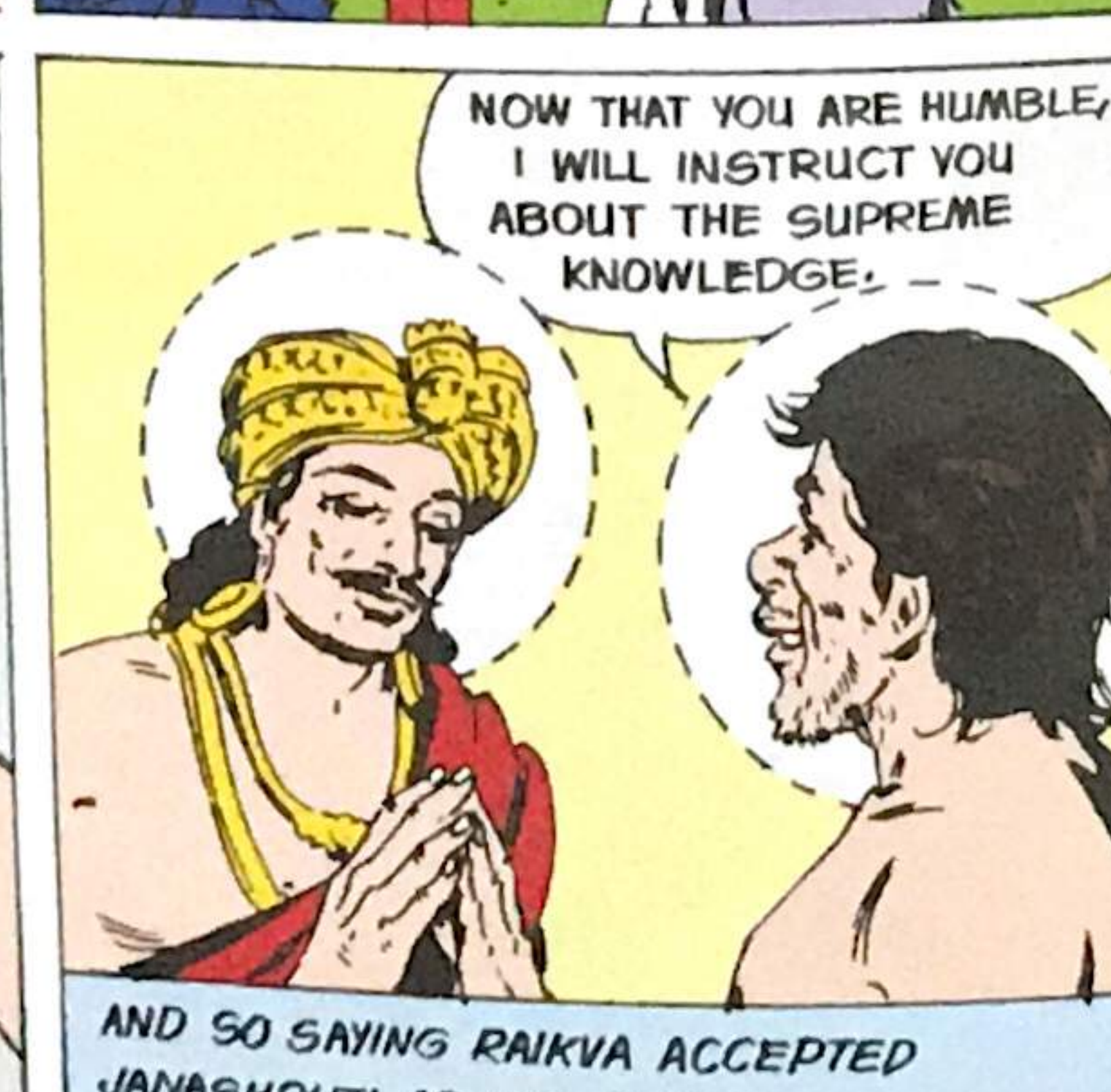
THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE IMBIBED UNLESS ONE HAS SHED ONE'S EGO.



ONLY THE HUMBLE CAN PERCEIVE THE BRAHMAN.



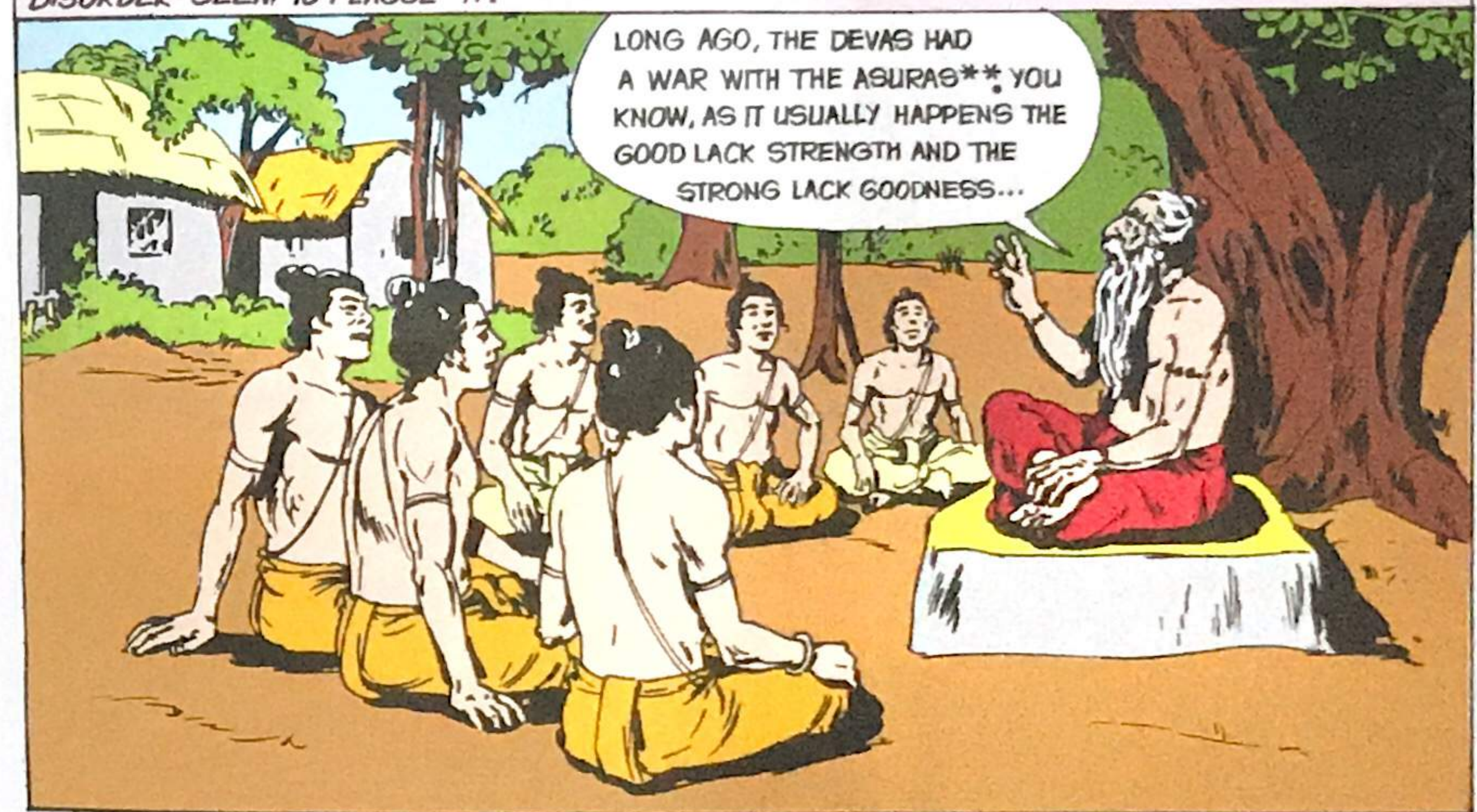
NOW THAT YOU ARE HUMBLE, I WILL INSTRUCT YOU ABOUT THE SUPREME KNOWLEDGE.



AND SO SAYING RAIKVA ACCEPTED JANASHRUTI AS HIS DISCIPLE.

WHEN THE DEVAS WERE HUMBLLED*

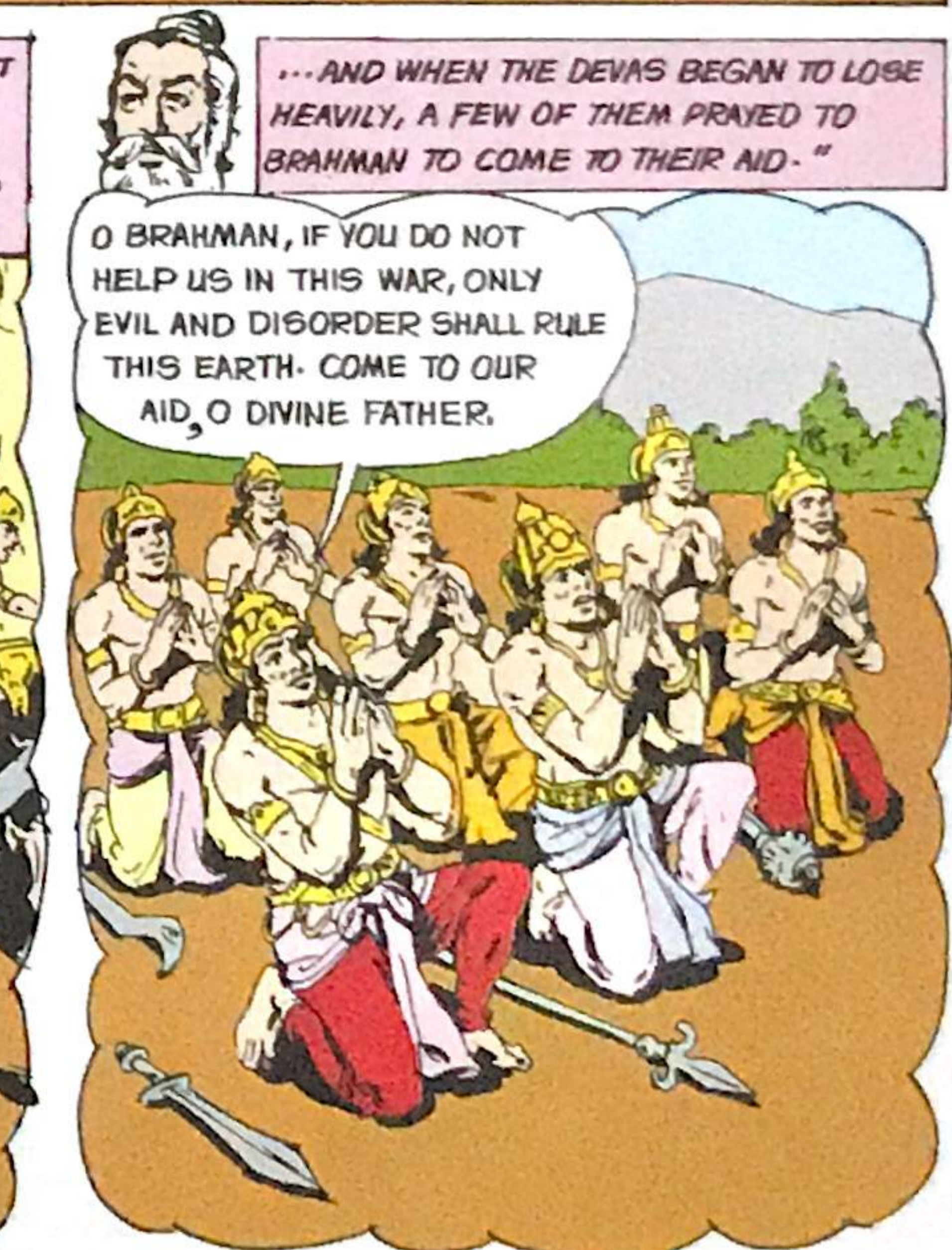
THIS STORY WAS TOLD BY AN ANCIENT RISHI TO HIS DISCIPLES TO ILLUSTRATE HOW BRAHMAN, THE SELF-EXISTING, ALL-PERVADING POWER, RESTORES ORDER IN THE WORLD WHENEVER EVIL AND DISORDER SEEM TO PLAGUE IT.



LONG AGO, THE DEVAS HAD A WAR WITH THE ASURAS** YOU KNOW, AS IT USUALLY HAPPENS THE GOOD LACK STRENGTH AND THE STRONG LACK GOODNESS...



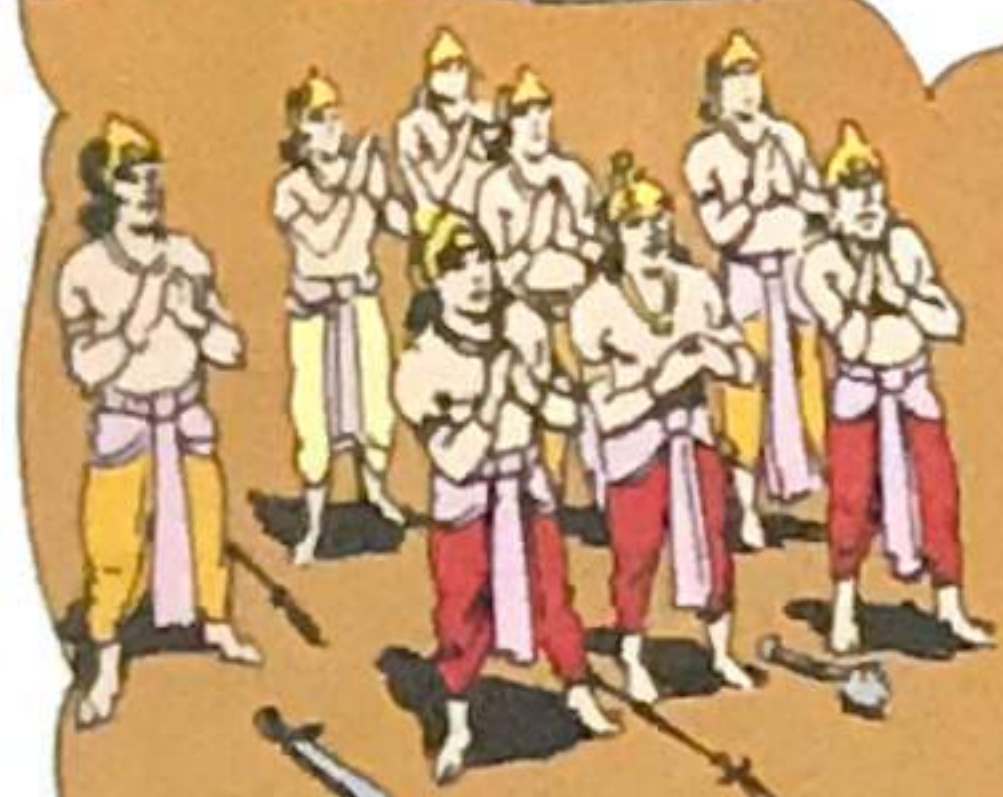
"... AFTER DAYS OF FIERCE FIGHTING, IT SEEMED THAT THE ASURAS WERE GETTING THE UPPER HAND FOR THEY WERE STRONG, UNPRINCIPLED AND RUTHLESS ...



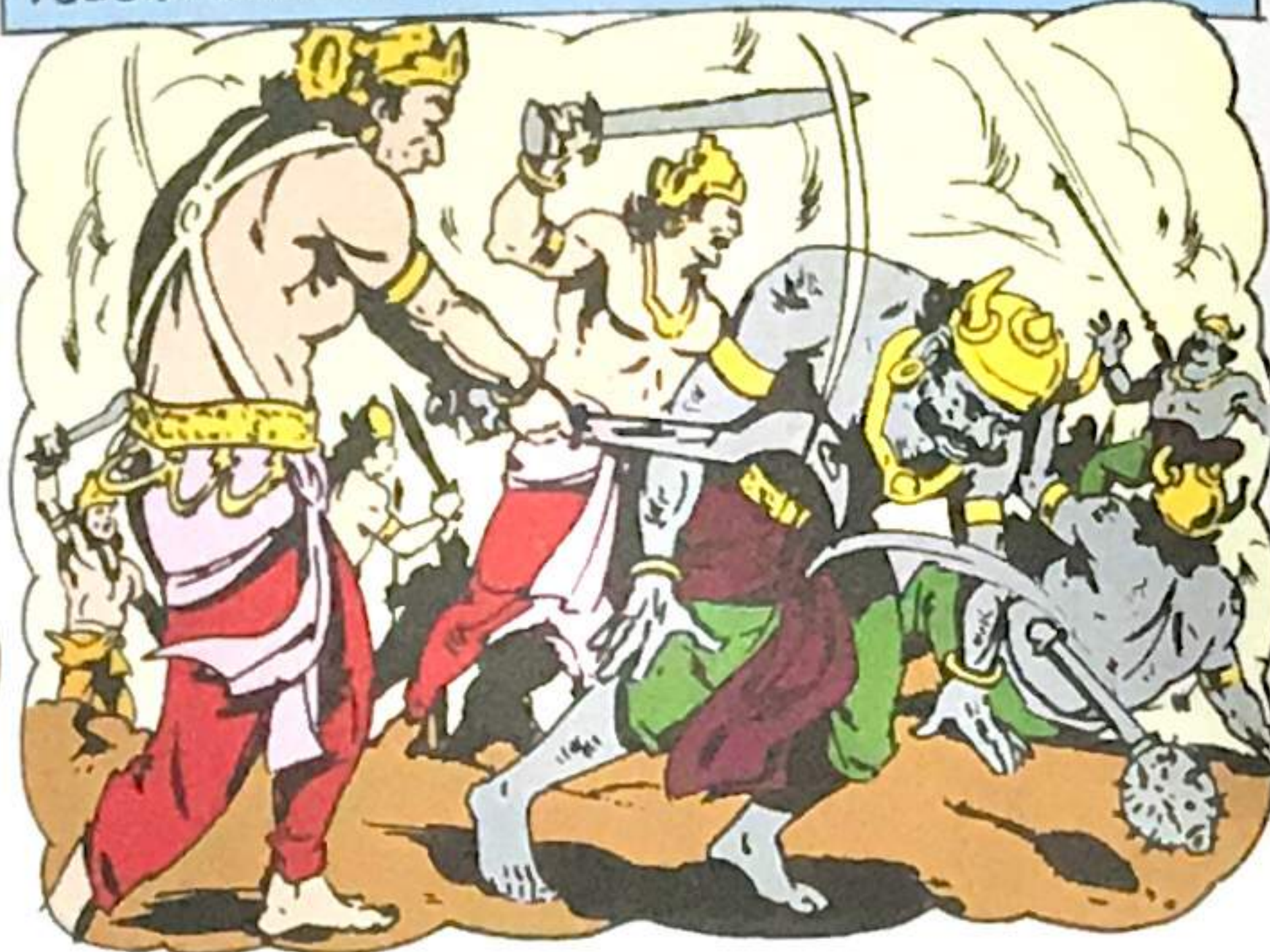
... AND WHEN THE DEVAS BEGAN TO LOSE HEAVILY, A FEW OF THEM PRAYED TO BRAHMAN TO COME TO THEIR AID."

O BRAHMAN, IF YOU DO NOT HELP US IN THIS WAR, ONLY EVIL AND DISORDER SHALL RULE THIS EARTH. COME TO OUR AID, O DIVINE FATHER.

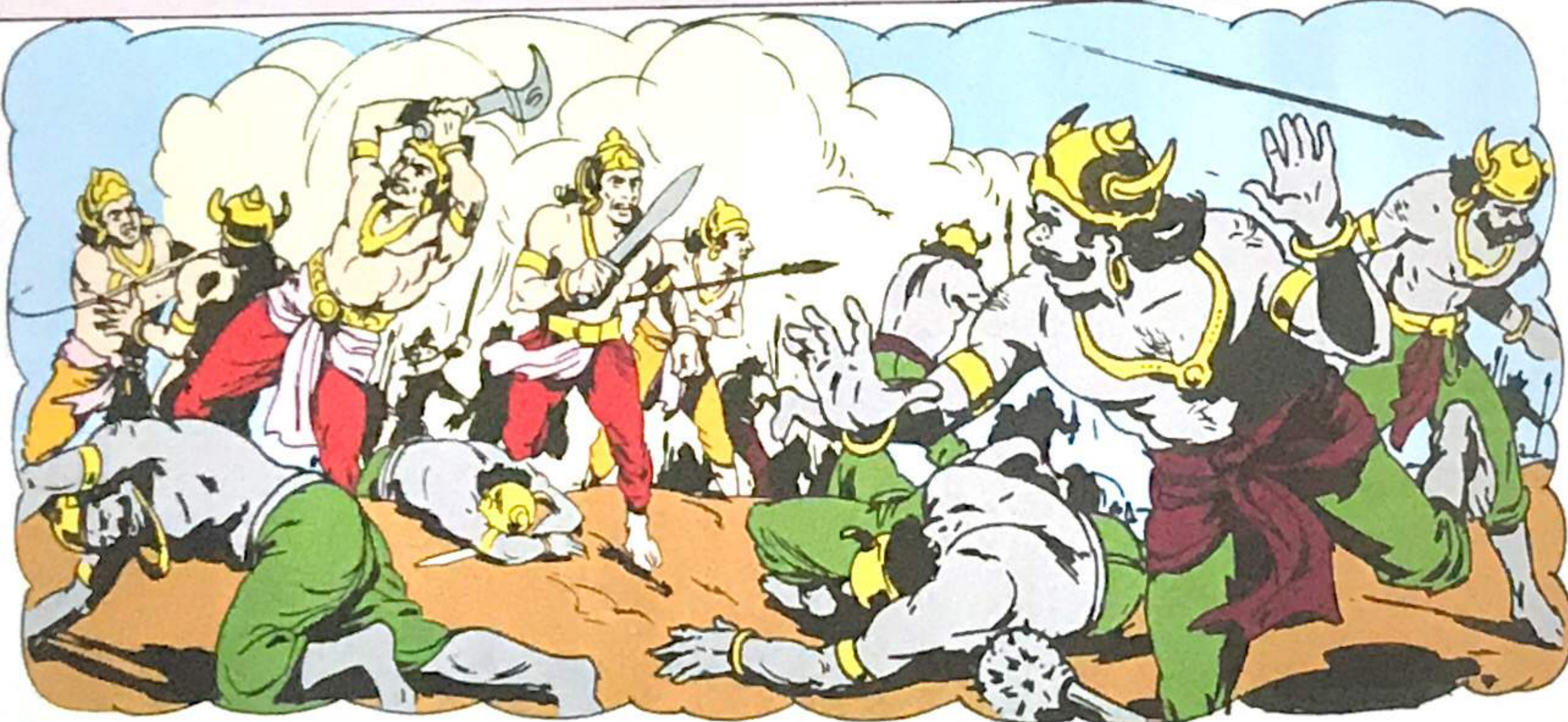
GO FORTH AND FIGHT
WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT. ONLY
GOOD CAN TRIUMPH
IN THE END.



"INVIGORATED BY THIS DIVINE ASSURANCE, THE DEVAS
FOUGHT BACK BRAVELY..."



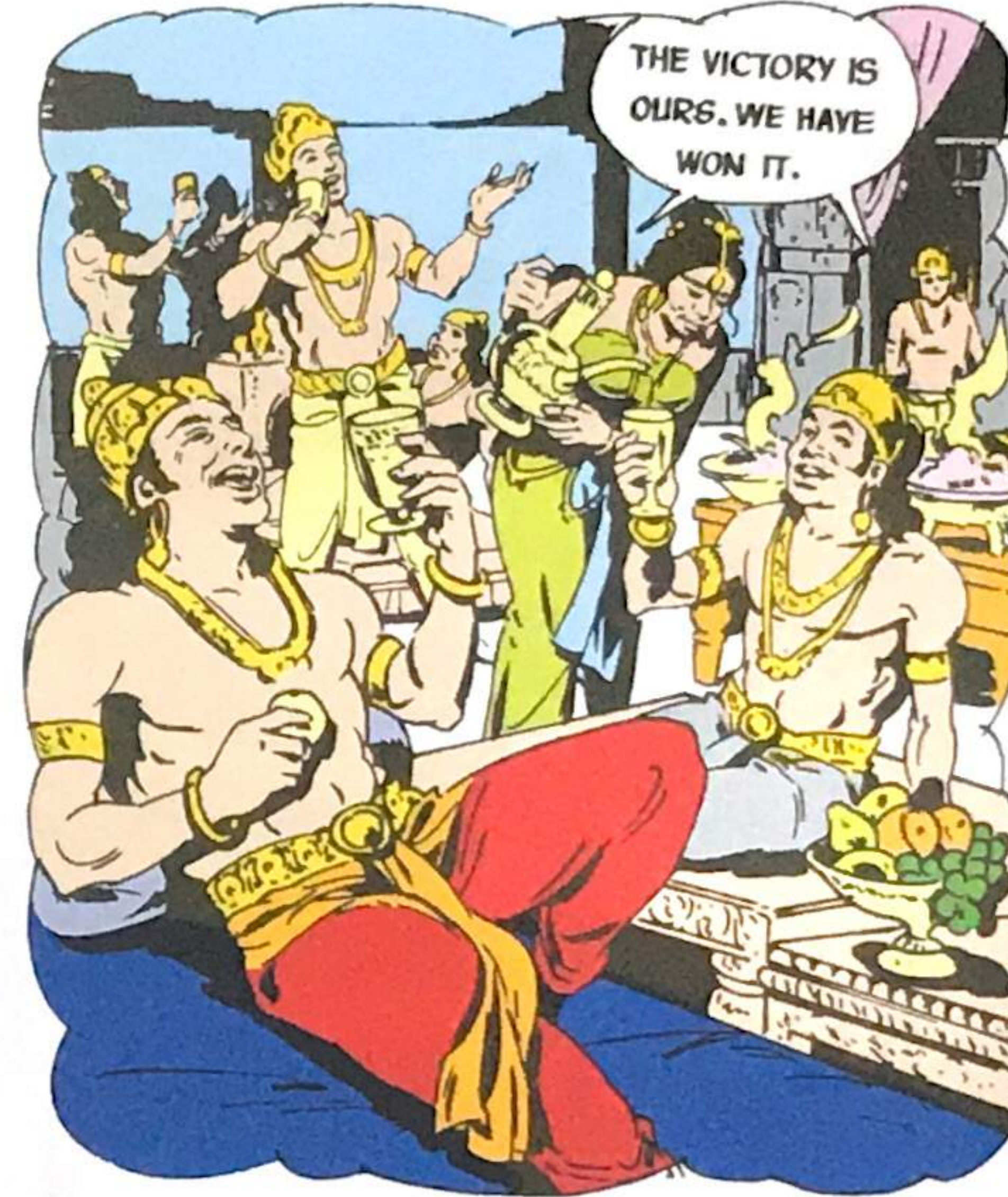
"...AND WITH DIVINE HELP, IT DID NOT TAKE THEM LONG TO VANQUISH THE ASURAS."



"OVERJOYED WITH THEIR VICTORY THE DEVAS CELEBRATED WITH GAY ABANDON."



THEY ATE, DRANK AND MADE MERRY FOR DAYS,
WEEKS, AND MONTHS...



THE VICTORY IS
OURS. WE HAVE
WON IT.

"... UNTIL THEY WERE INTOXICATED BY THEIR
SUCCESS—"

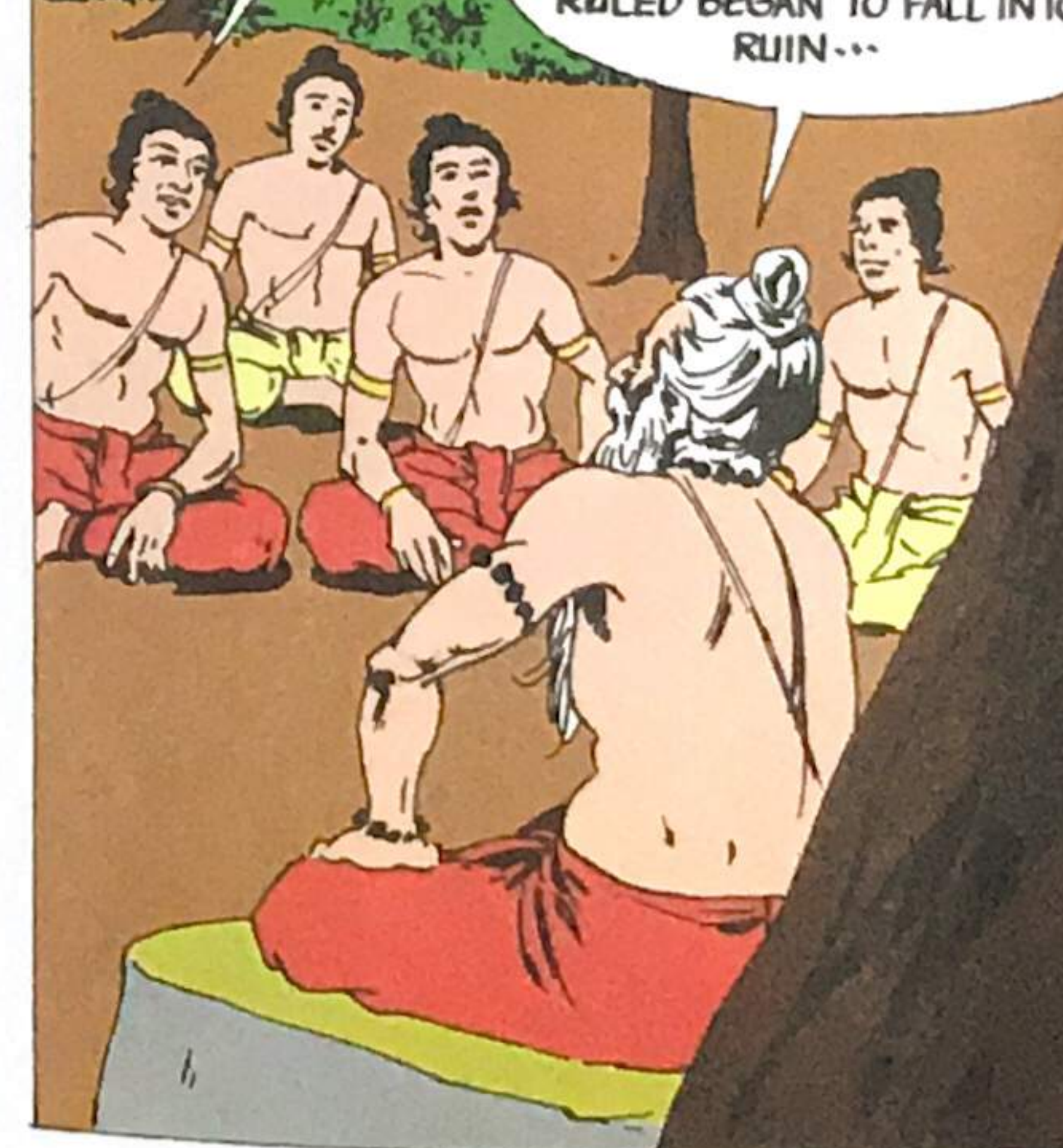


WE'RE
THE
GREATEST!!

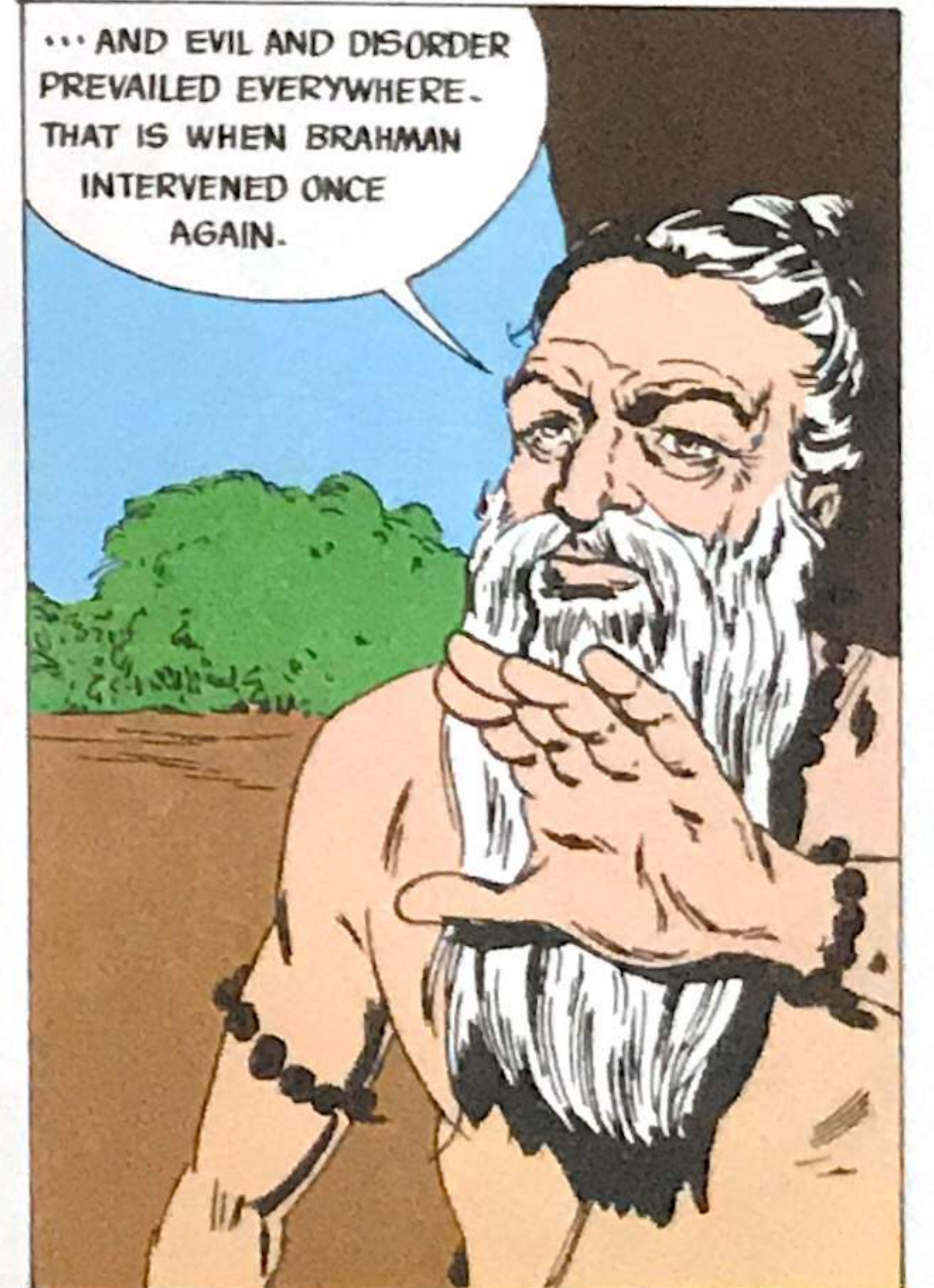
WE HAVE
NO EQUALS!!

THE DEVAS
ATTRIBUTED THE
VICTORY TO
THEMSELVES,
DID THEY?

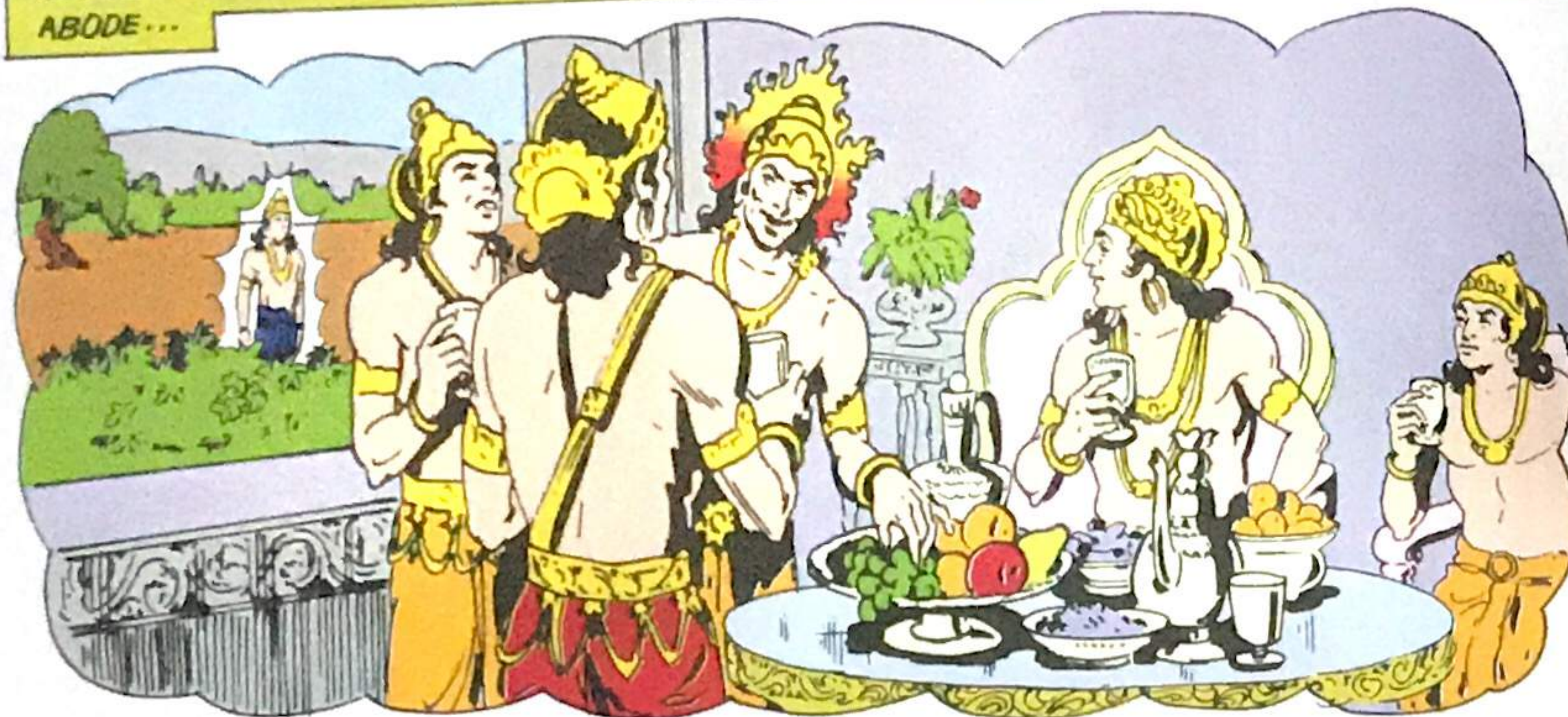
YES. NEGLECTING THEIR
DUTIES, THEY WENT ON
AND ON WITH THE
CELEBRATIONS. SOON THE
WORLDS THAT THE DEVAS
RULED BEGAN TO FALL INTO
RUIN...



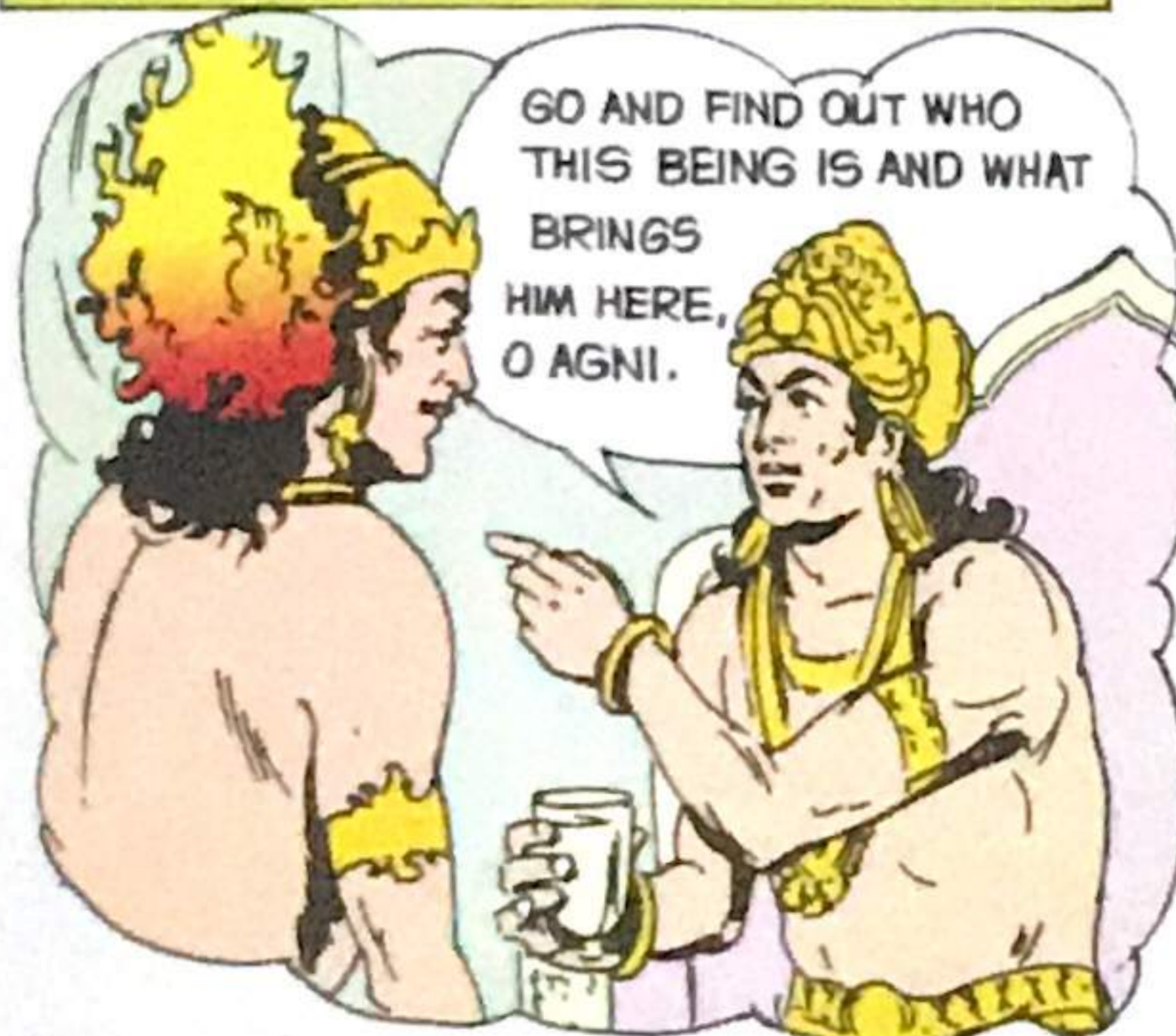
... AND EVIL AND DISORDER
PREVAILED EVERYWHERE.
THAT IS WHEN BRAHMAN
INTERVENED ONCE
AGAIN.



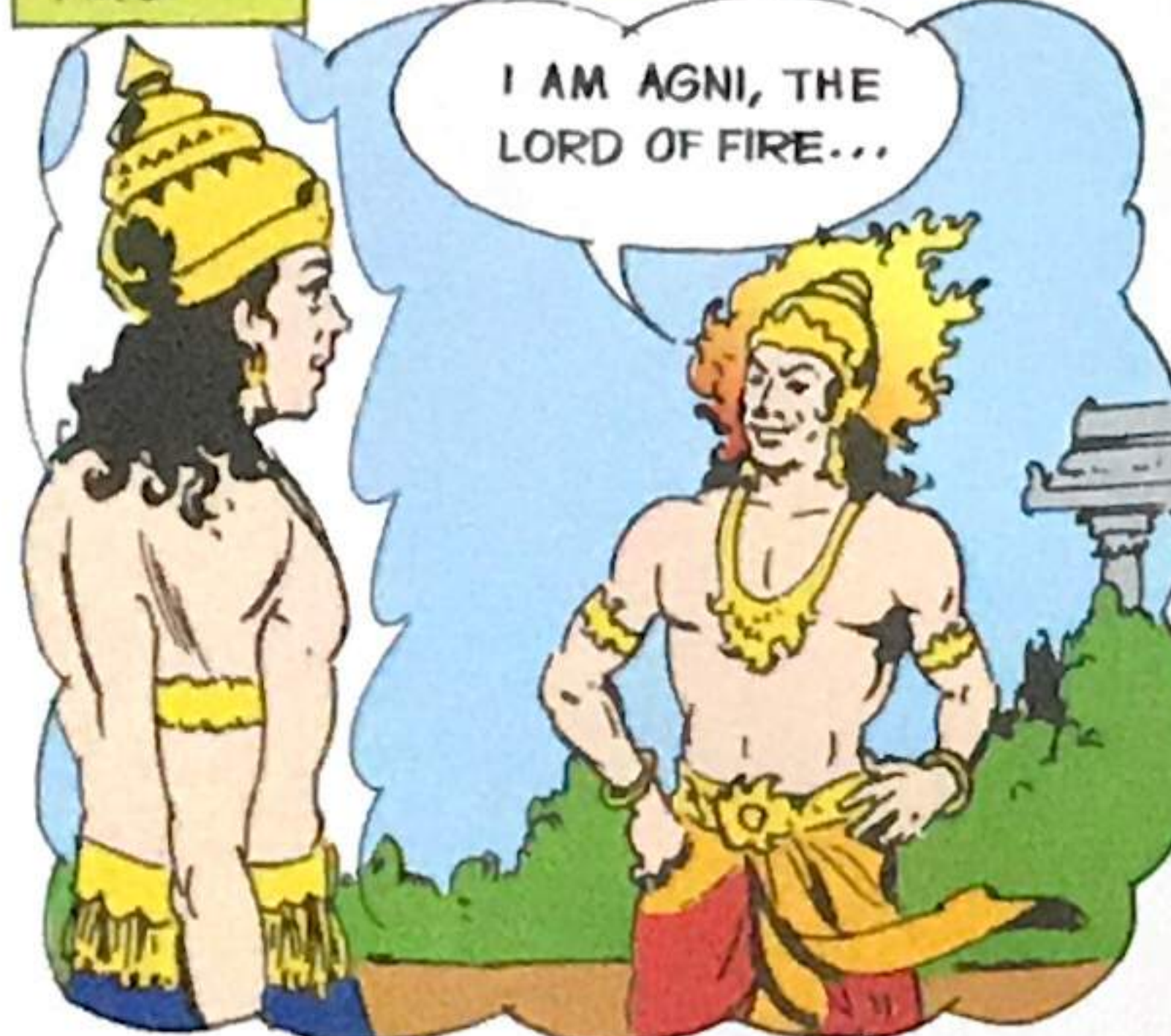
"ONE DAY AS THE DEVAS WERE IMMERSSED IN THEIR MERRY MAKING, A YAKSHA* CAME OUTSIDE THEIR ABODE..."



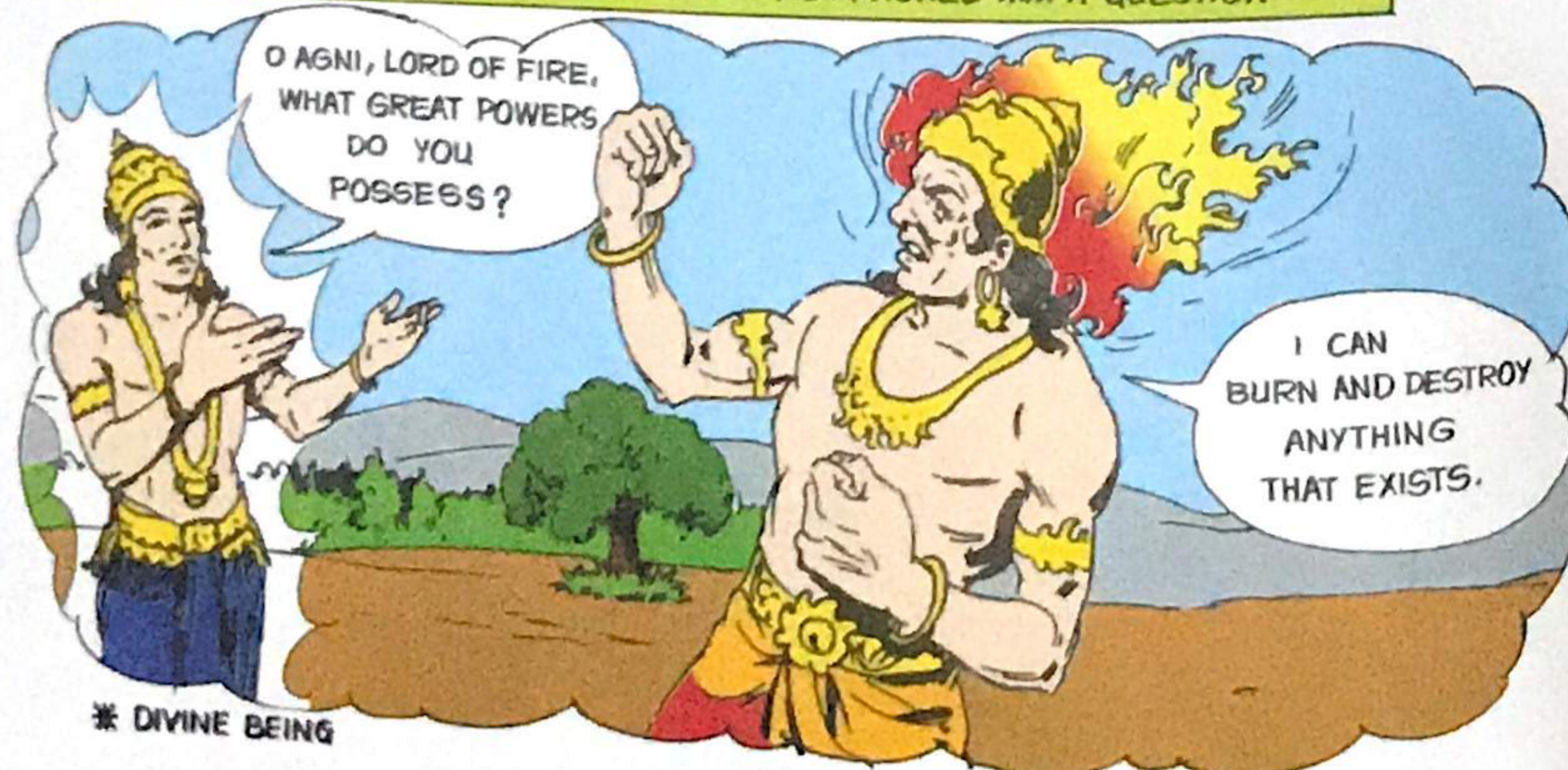
"THE YAKSHA SOON CAUGHT INDRA'S EYE."



"AGNI APPROACHED THE YAKSHA AND SPOKE FIRST —



"BEFORE AGNI COULD FINISH HIS SENTENCE, THE YAKSHA ASKED HIM A QUESTION —



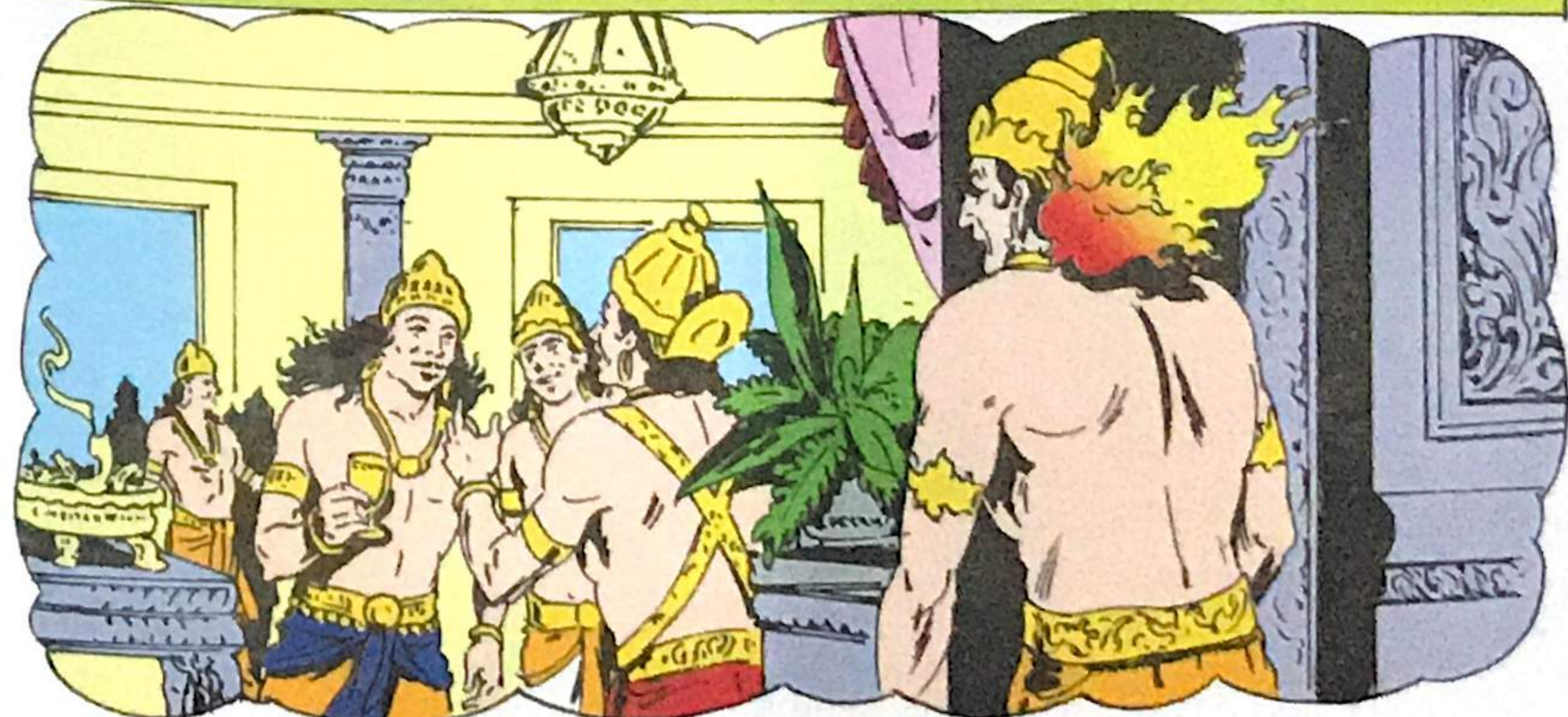
* DIVINE BEING



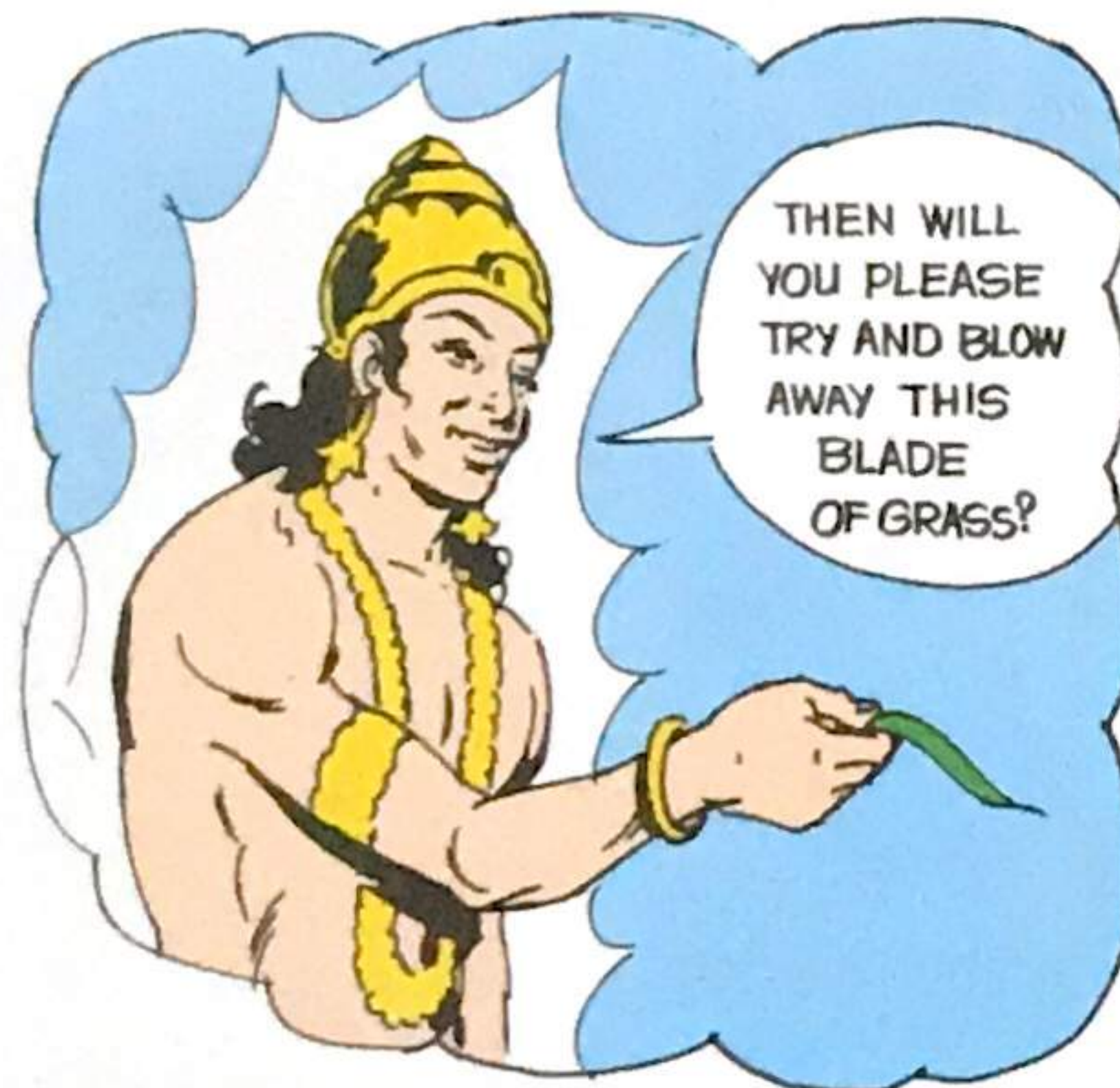
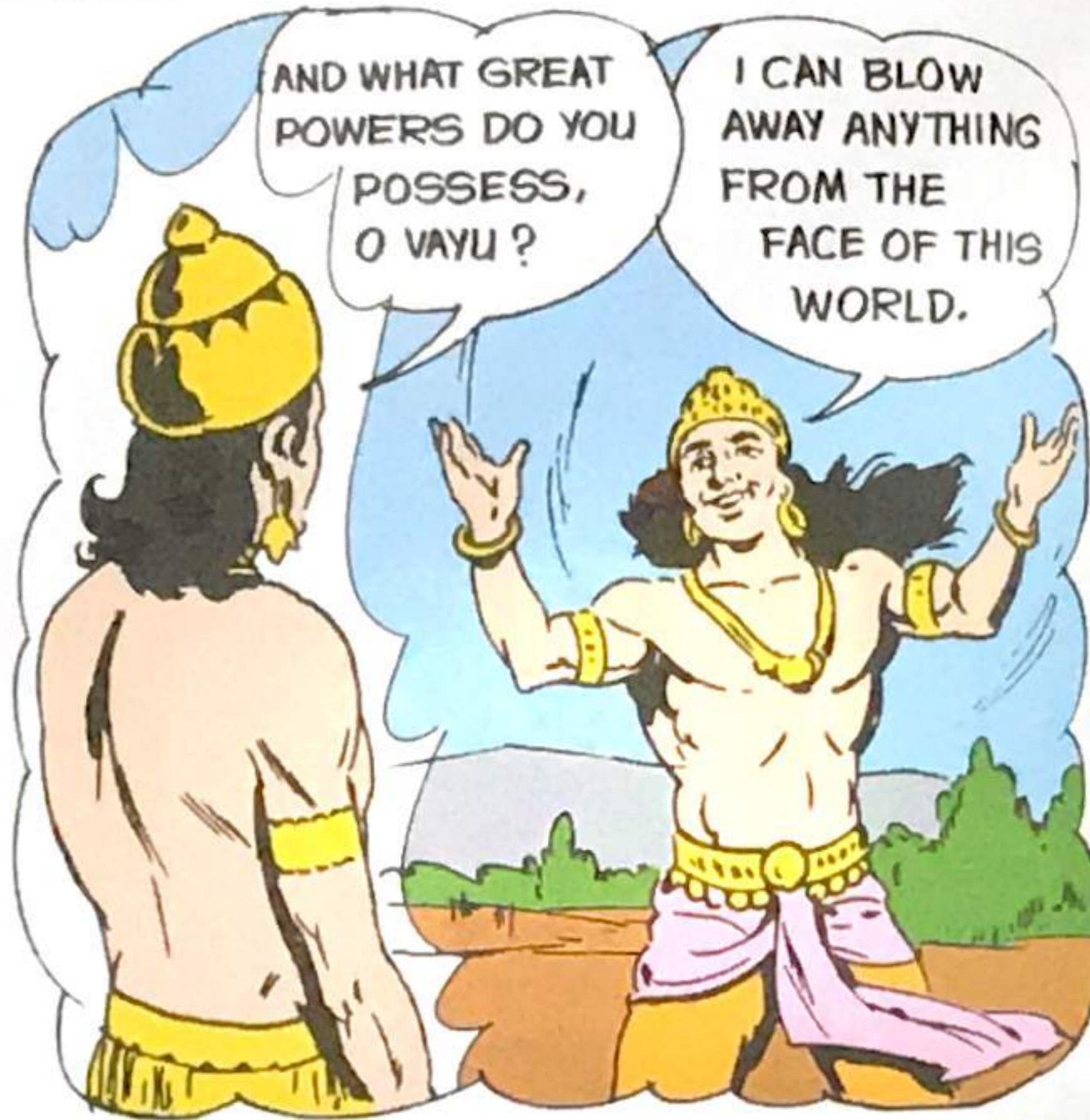
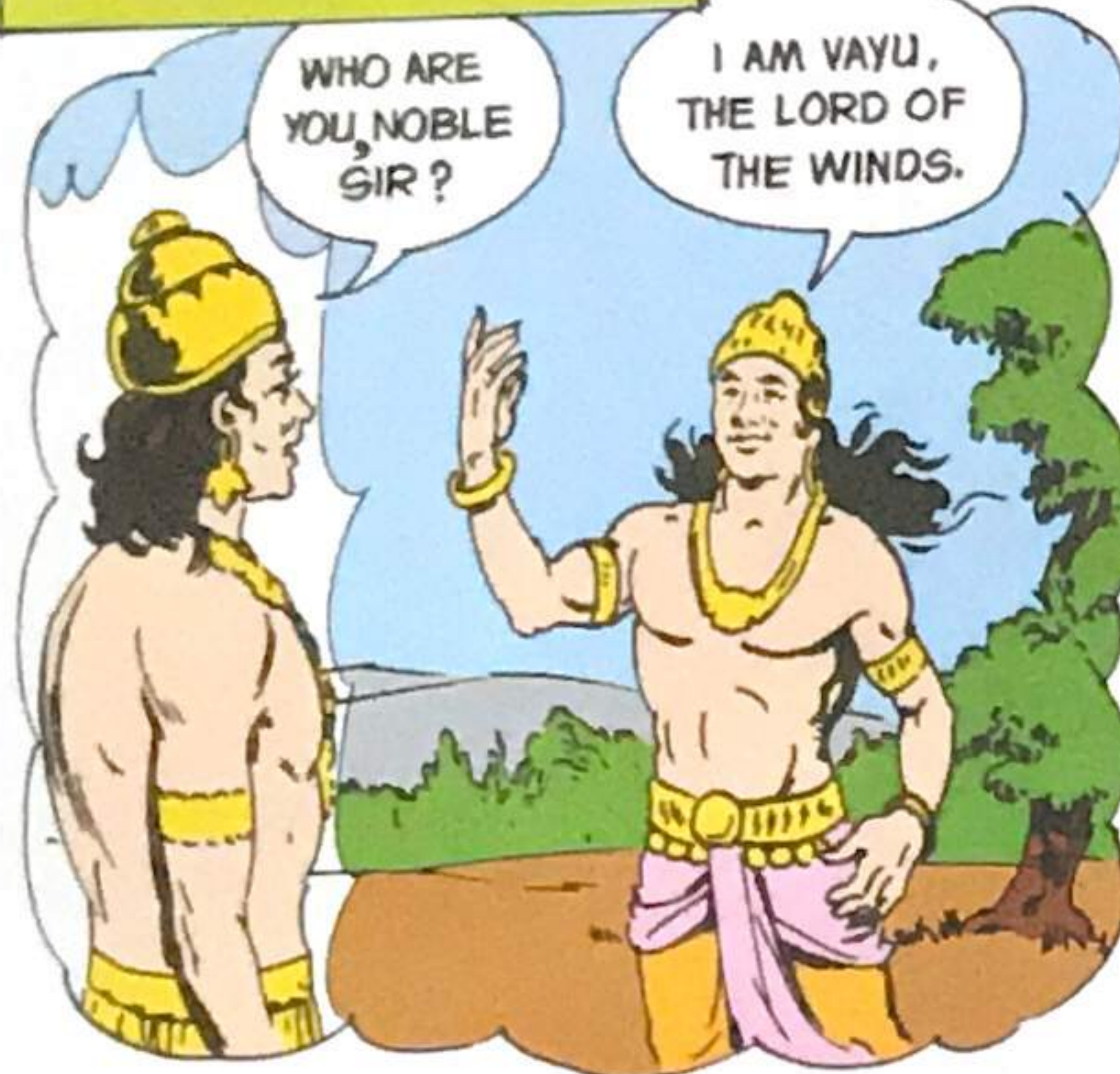
AGNI RAGED AND THE FLAMES ENGULFED THE BLADE OF GRASS BUT NO MATTER HOW HARD HE TRIED, HE COULD NOT SUCCEED —



"AFTER HAVING FAILED TO INCINERATE THAT SINGLE BLADE, HE WALKED BACK TO THE PALACE DEJECTED AND HUMBLD. HE WONDERED WHO THIS STRANGE POWERFUL BEING WAS."



"INDRA THEN SENT VAYU —



"VAYU SUMMONED THE FIERCEST OF WINDS AND AGAIN NO MATTER HOW HARD HE TRIED..."



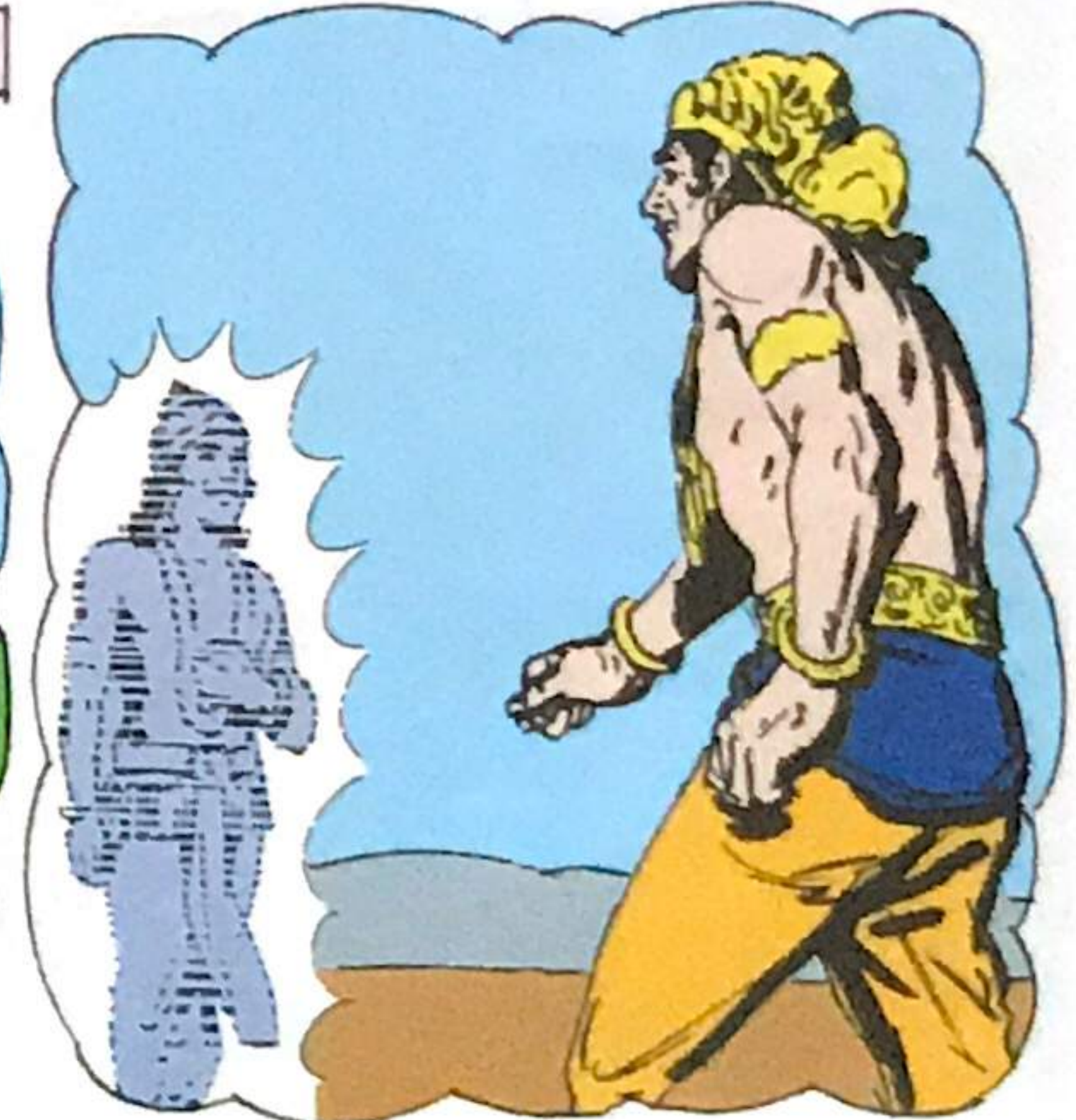
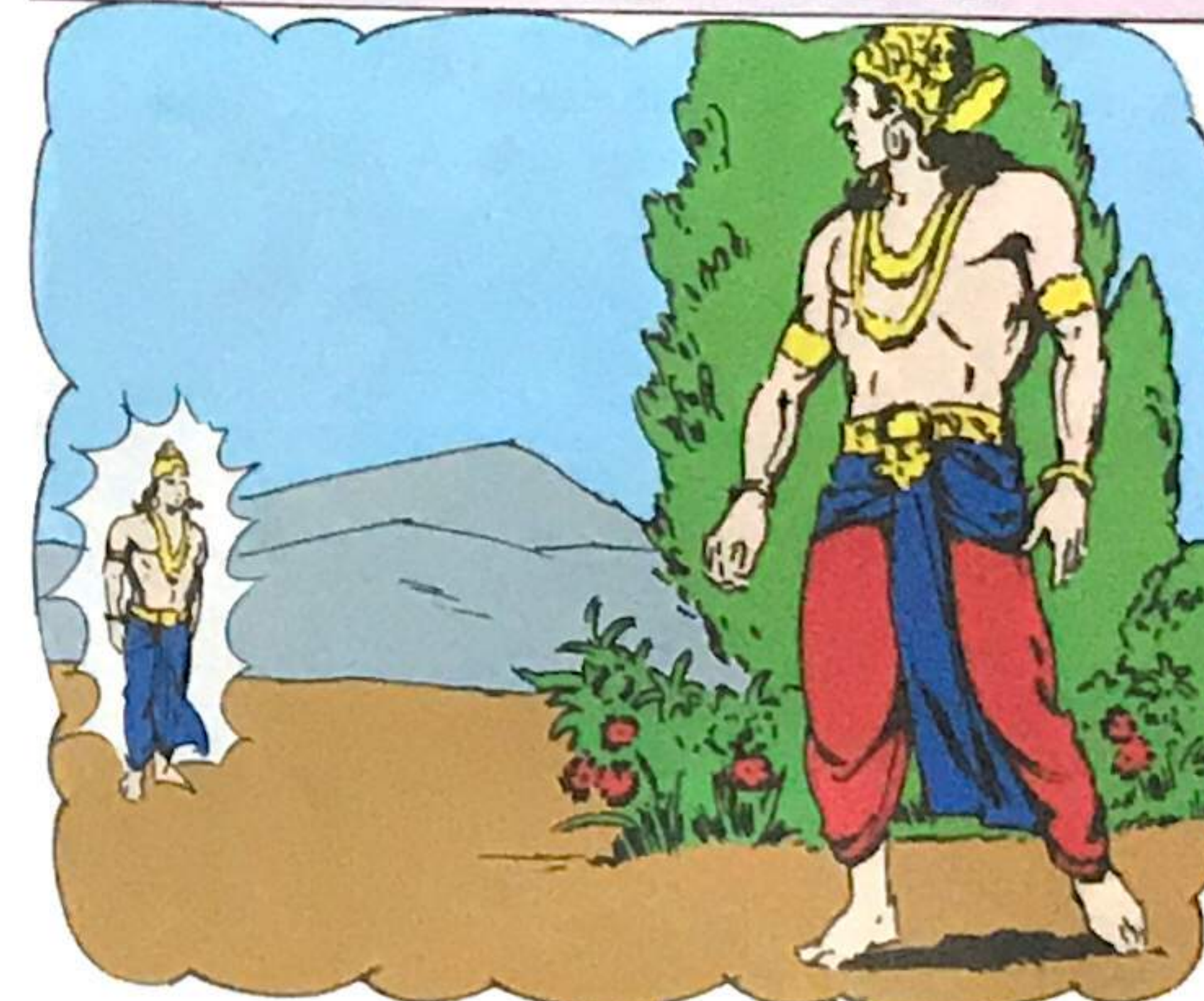
"... THE BLADE OF GRASS JUST WOULD NOT BUDGE.



"VAYU TOO WENT BACK TO THE PALACE THE WAY AGNI HAD — FATIGUED AND HUMBLER BUT NOT REALISING WHO THE YAKSHA WAS.



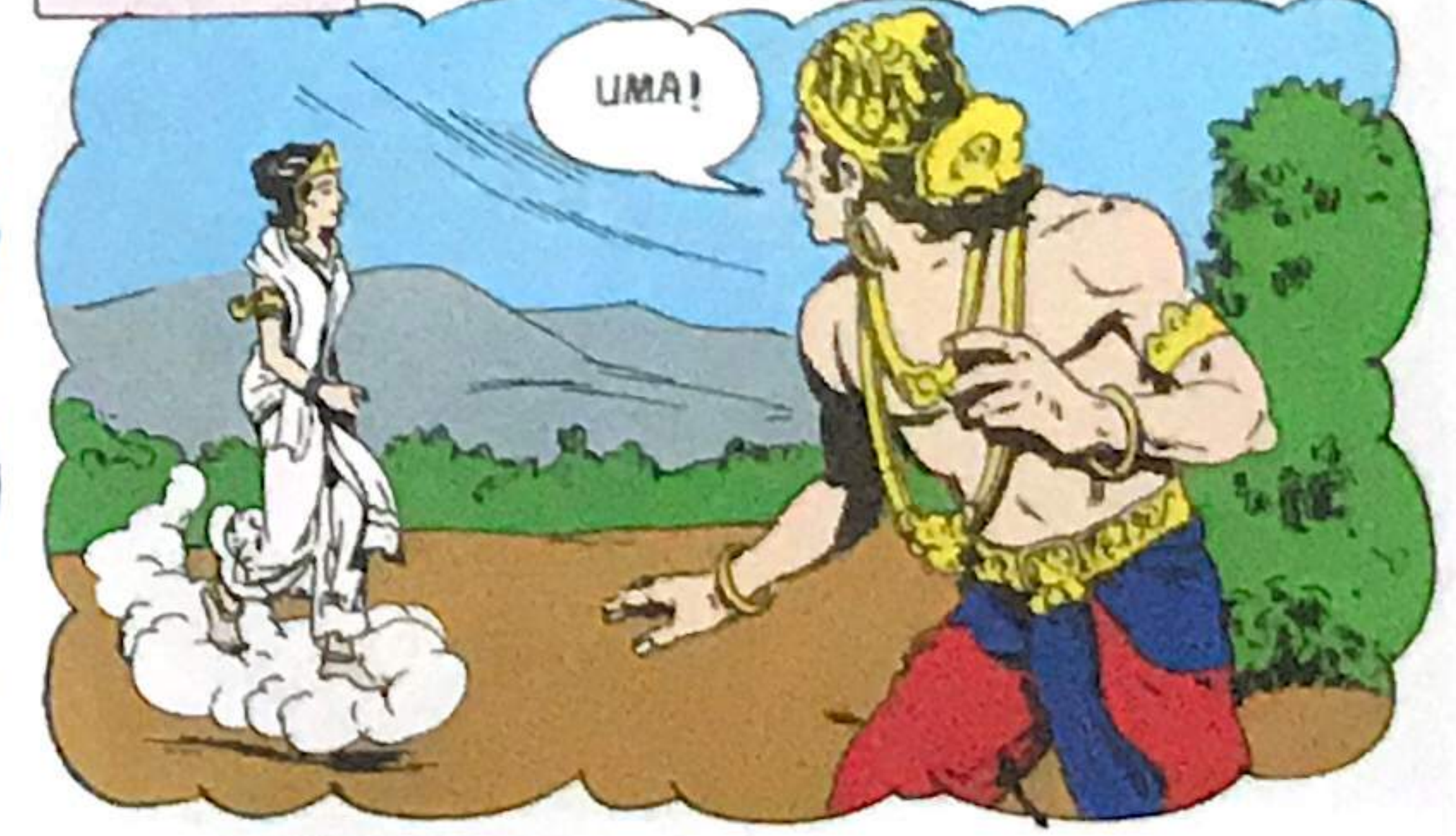
... AND THEN INDRA HIMSELF STEPPED OUT —

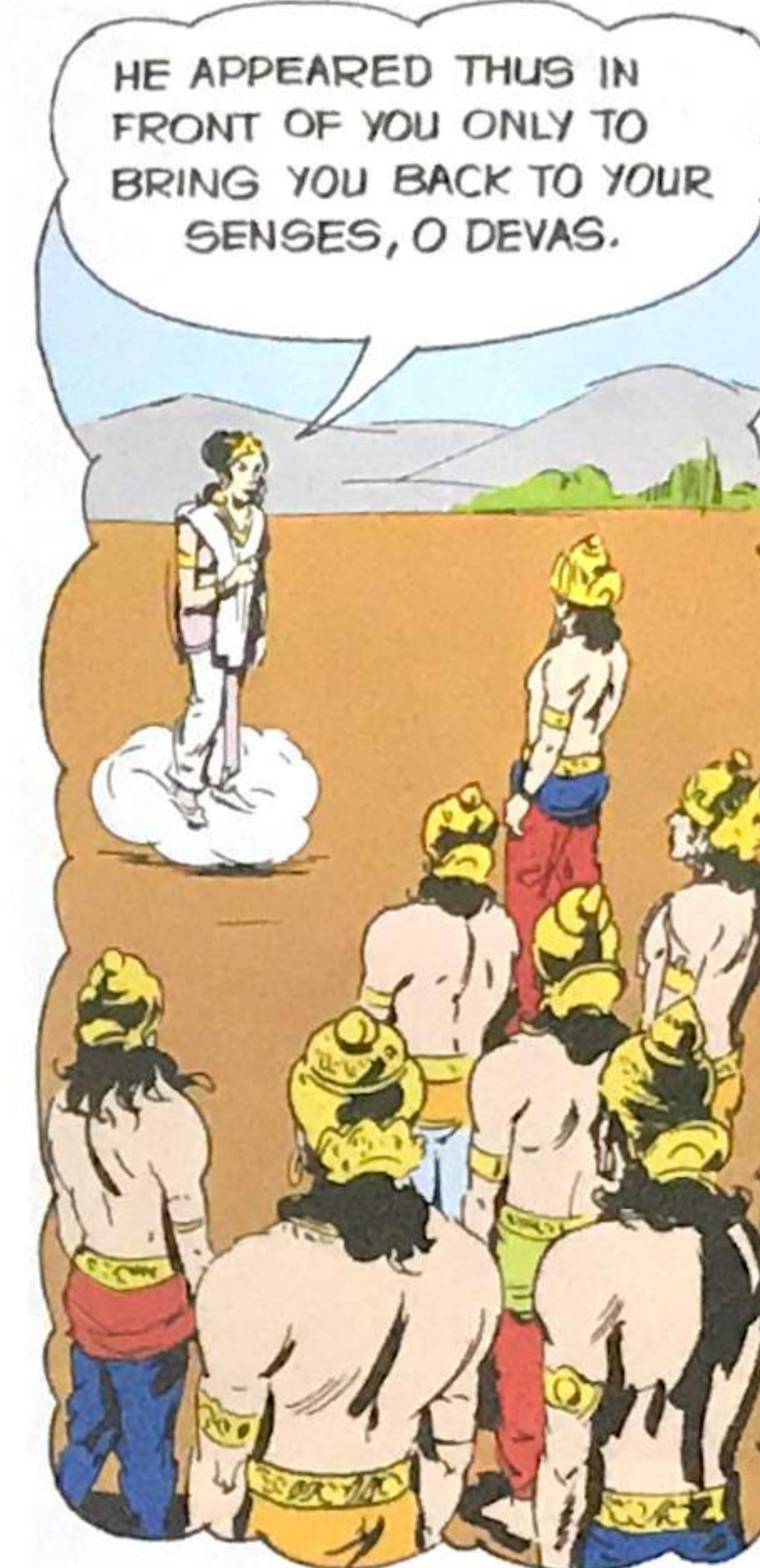
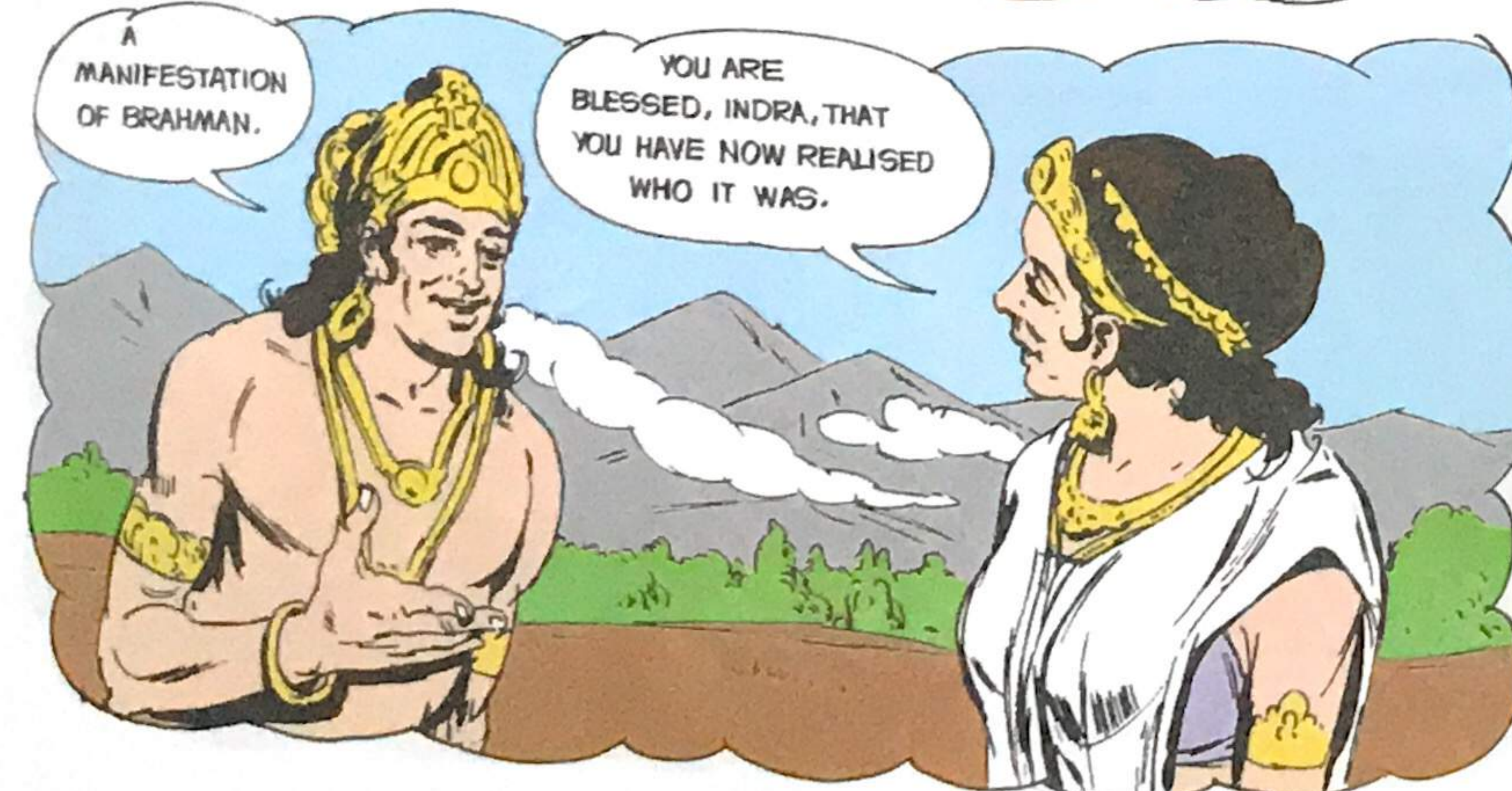
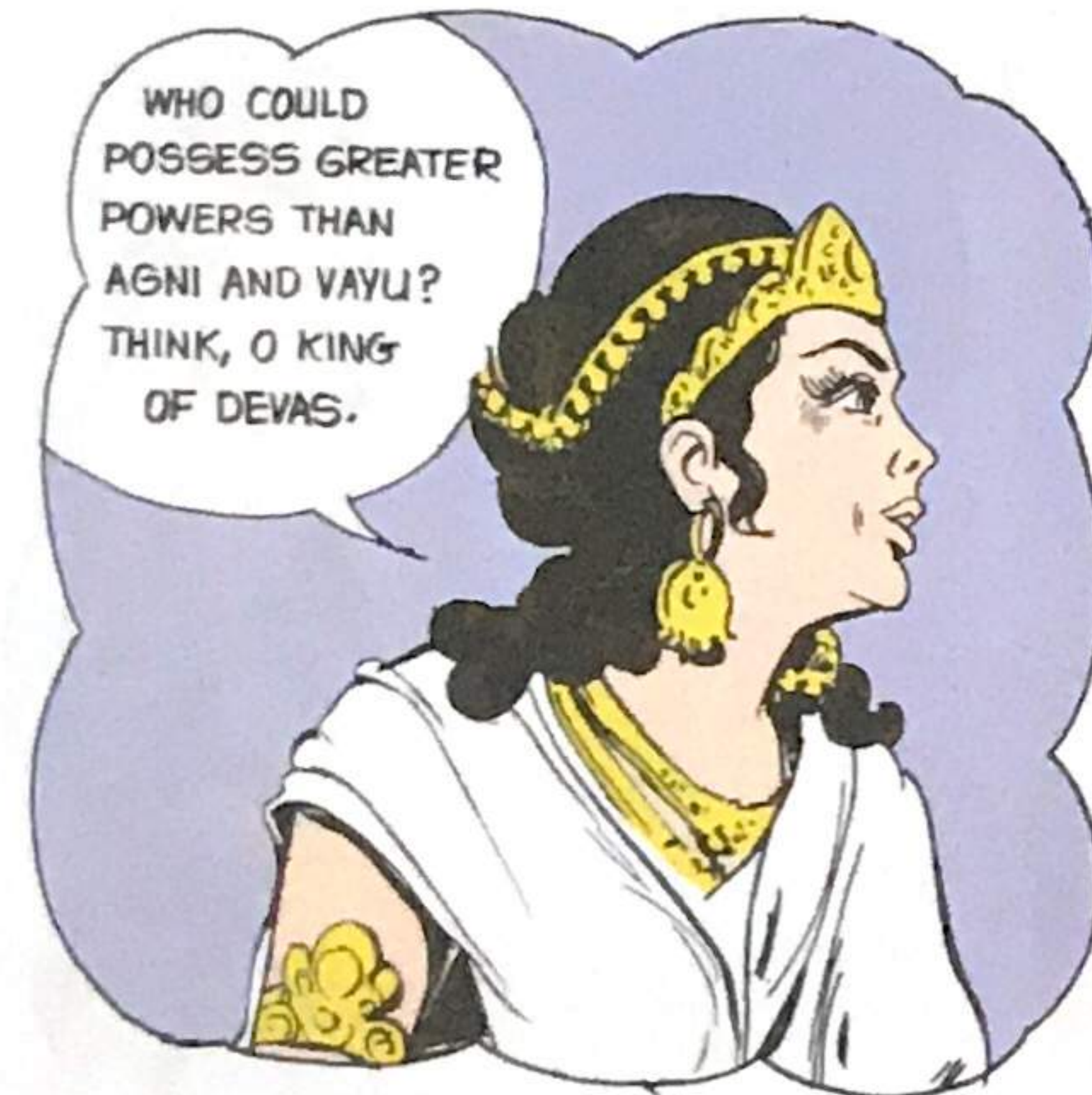
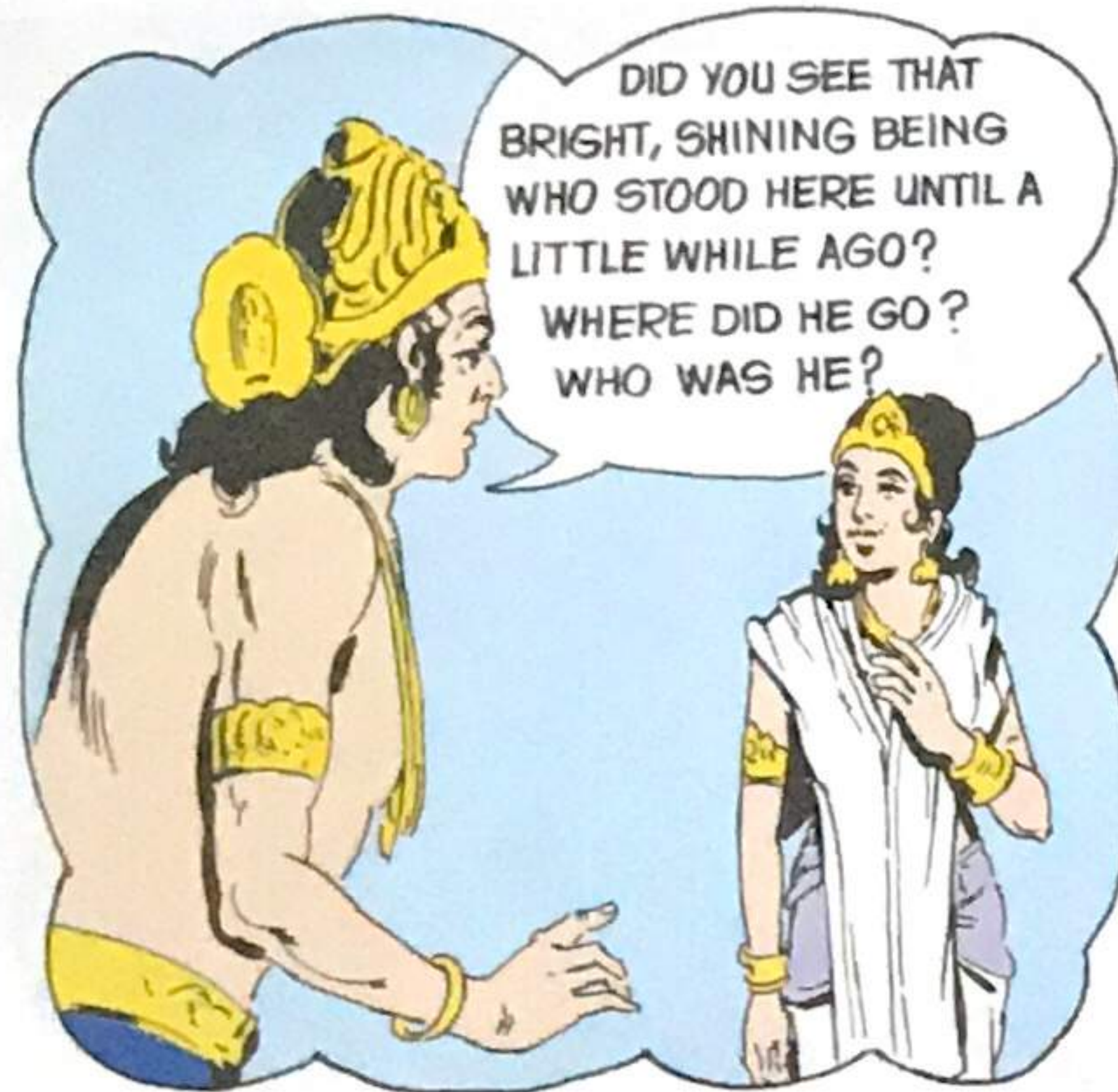


"SUDDENLY THE YAKSHA DISAPPEARED.



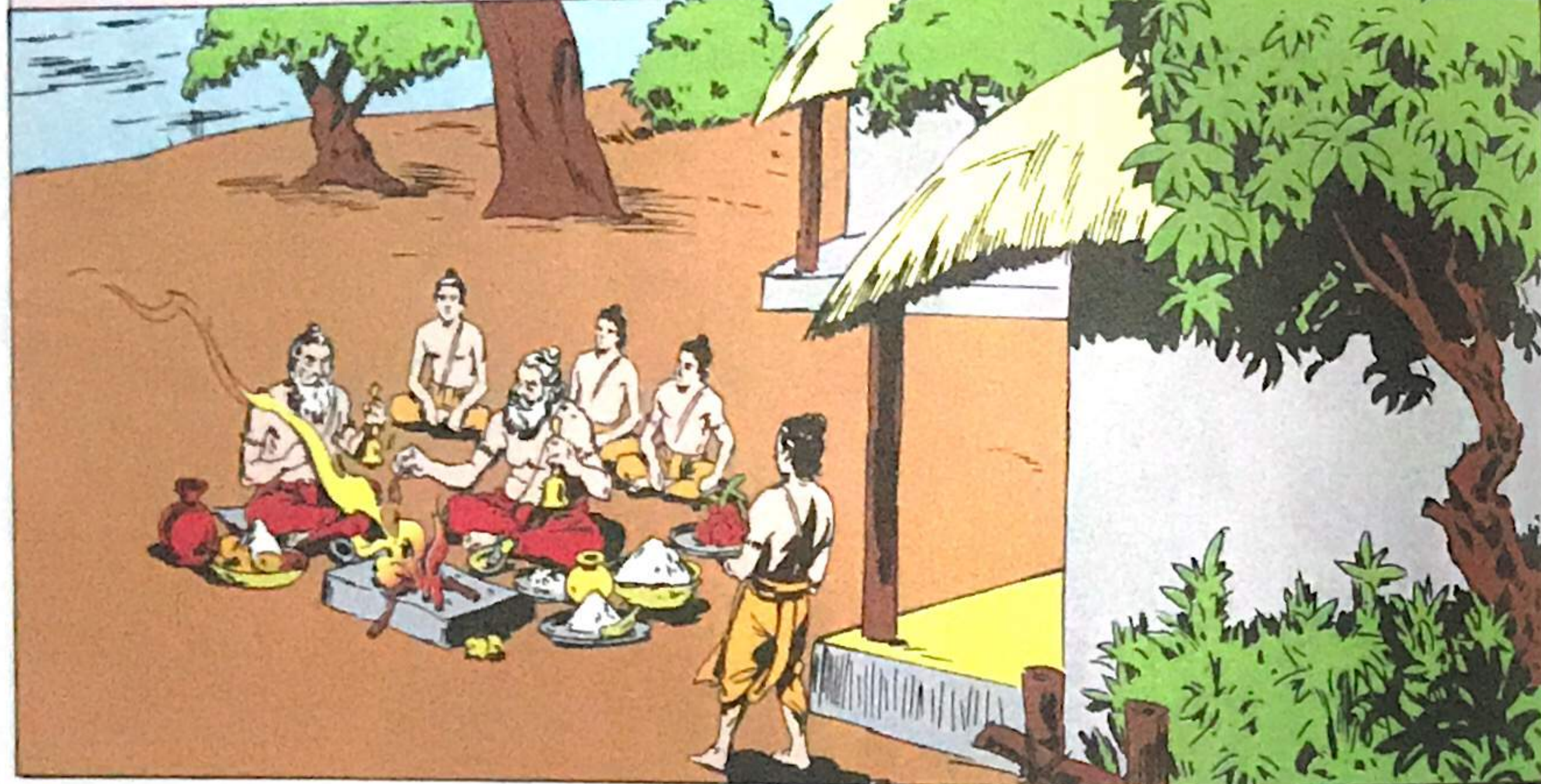
"INDRA LOOKED HERE AND THERE FOR THE YAKSHA BUT COULD NOT FIND HIM. INSTEAD HIS EYES FELL UPON UMA, THE GODDESS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE, WHO HAPPENED TO PASS BY..."





THE BOLD BEGGAR*

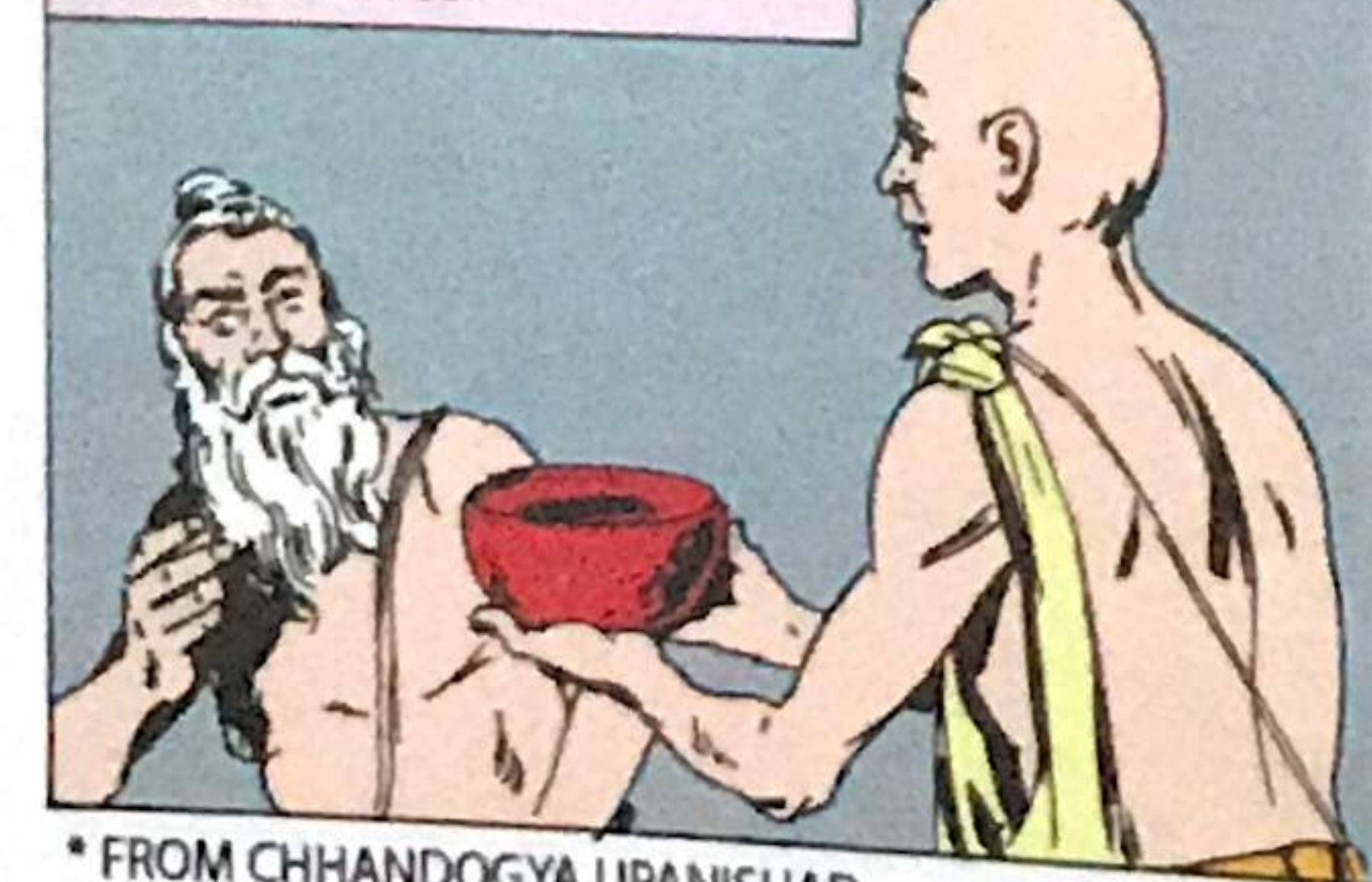
SHAUNAKA KAPEYA AND ABHIPRATARIN KAKSHASENI WERE TWO SAGES WHO LIVED IN A HERMITAGE IN THE FOREST. THEY SPENT MOST OF THEIR TIME WORSHIPPING VAYU, THE GOD OF WIND.



ONE AFTERNOON, AS THE SAGES WERE TO BEGIN THEIR MEAL...



... A BRAHMACHARI ARRIVED WITH HIS BOWL.

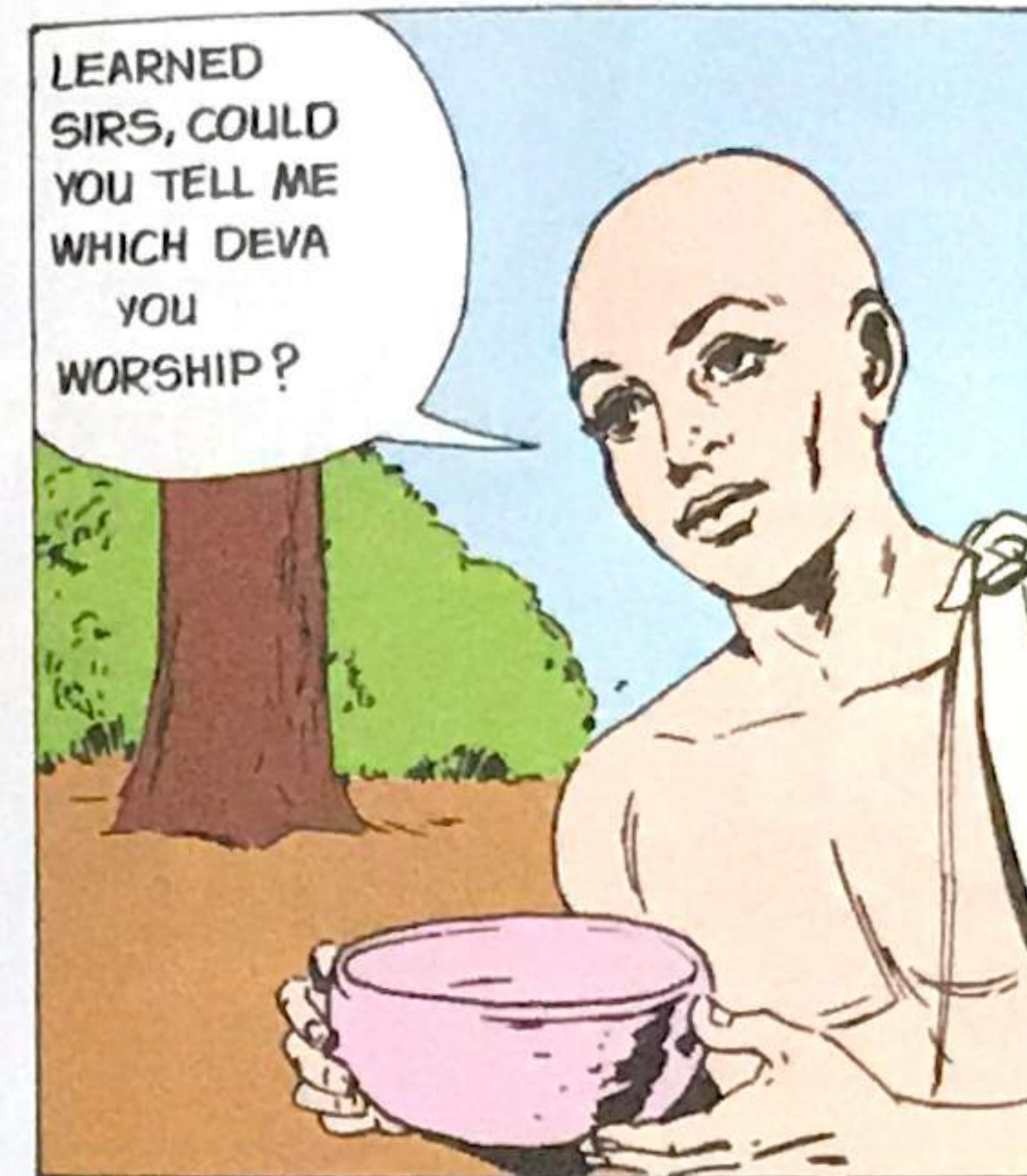


NO, MY BOY, WE CANNOT SPARE YOU ANY FOOD.

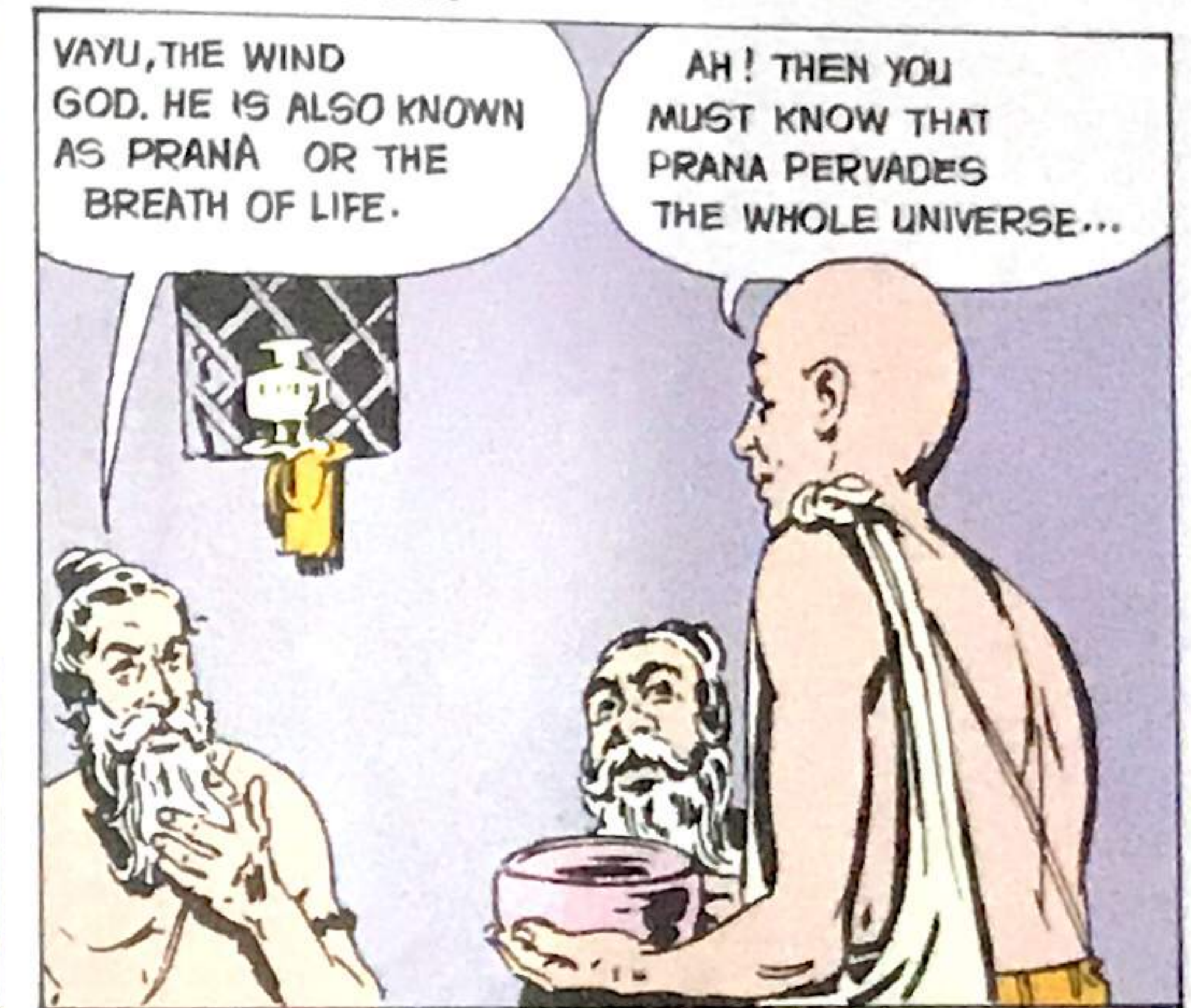


* FROM CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD.

LEARNED SIR, COULD YOU TELL ME WHICH DEVA YOU WORSHIP?

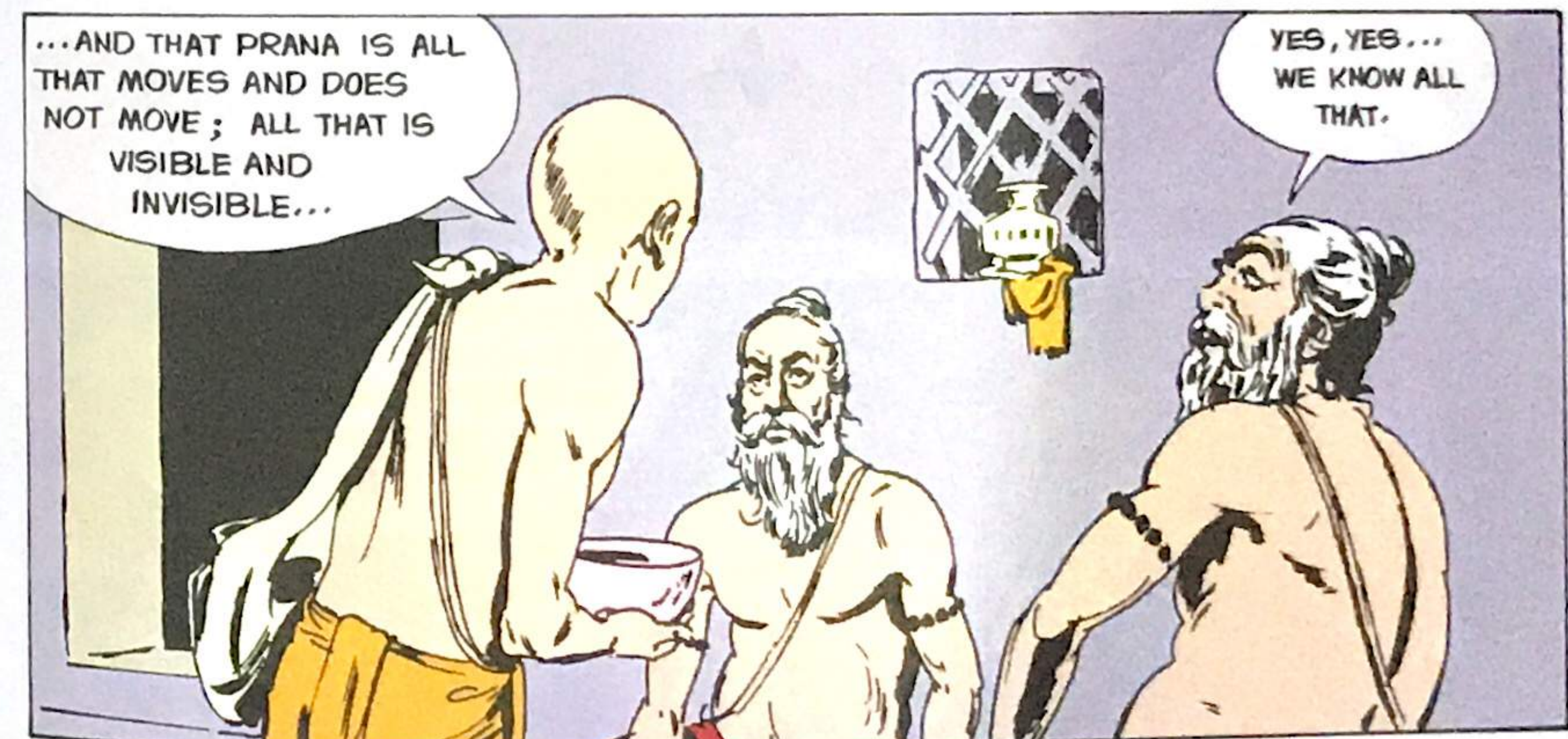


VAYU, THE WIND GOD. HE IS ALSO KNOWN AS PRANA OR THE BREATH OF LIFE.



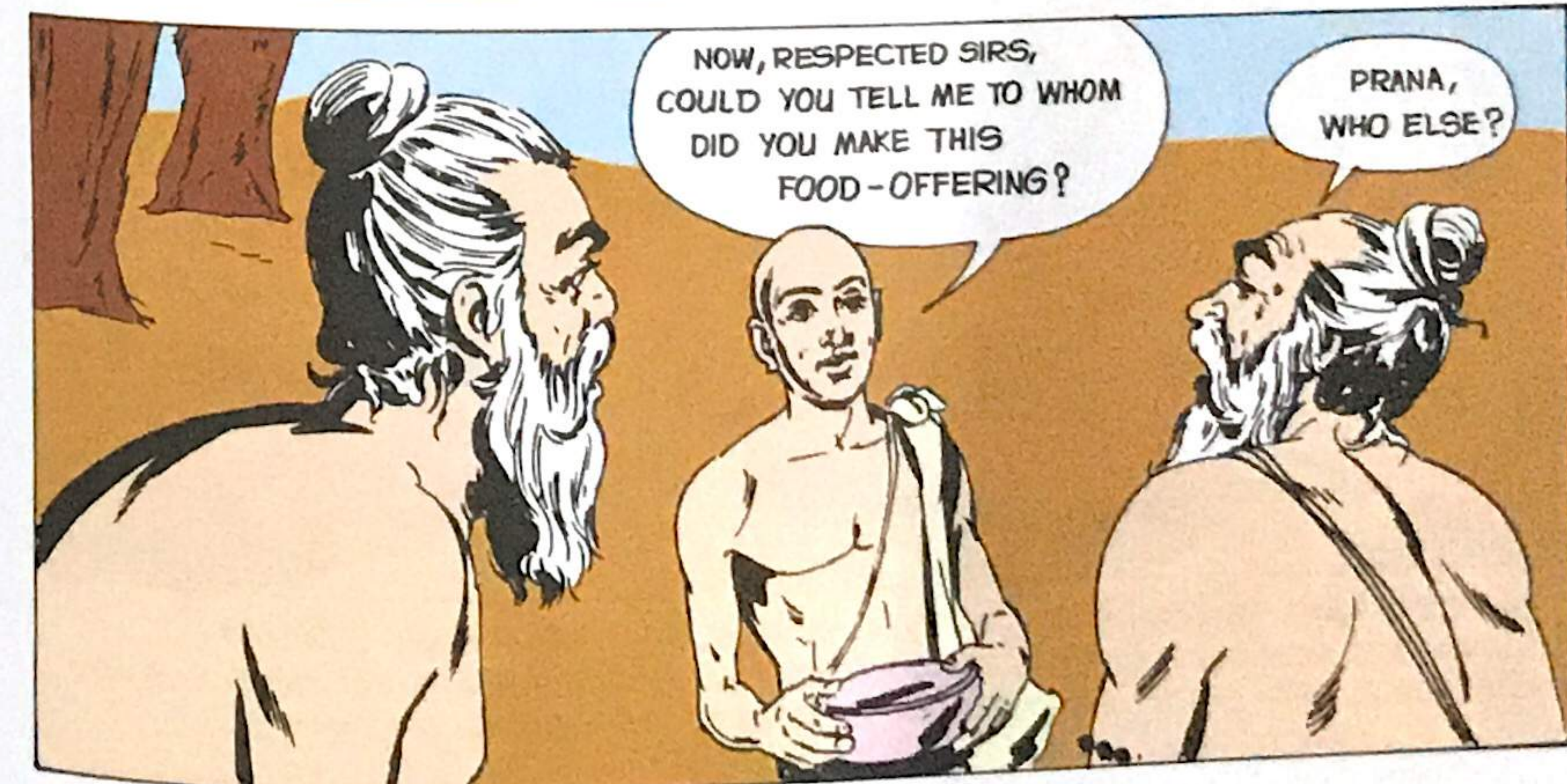
AH! THEN YOU MUST KNOW THAT PRANA PERVADES THE WHOLE UNIVERSE...

...AND THAT PRANA IS ALL THAT MOVES AND DOES NOT MOVE; ALL THAT IS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE...

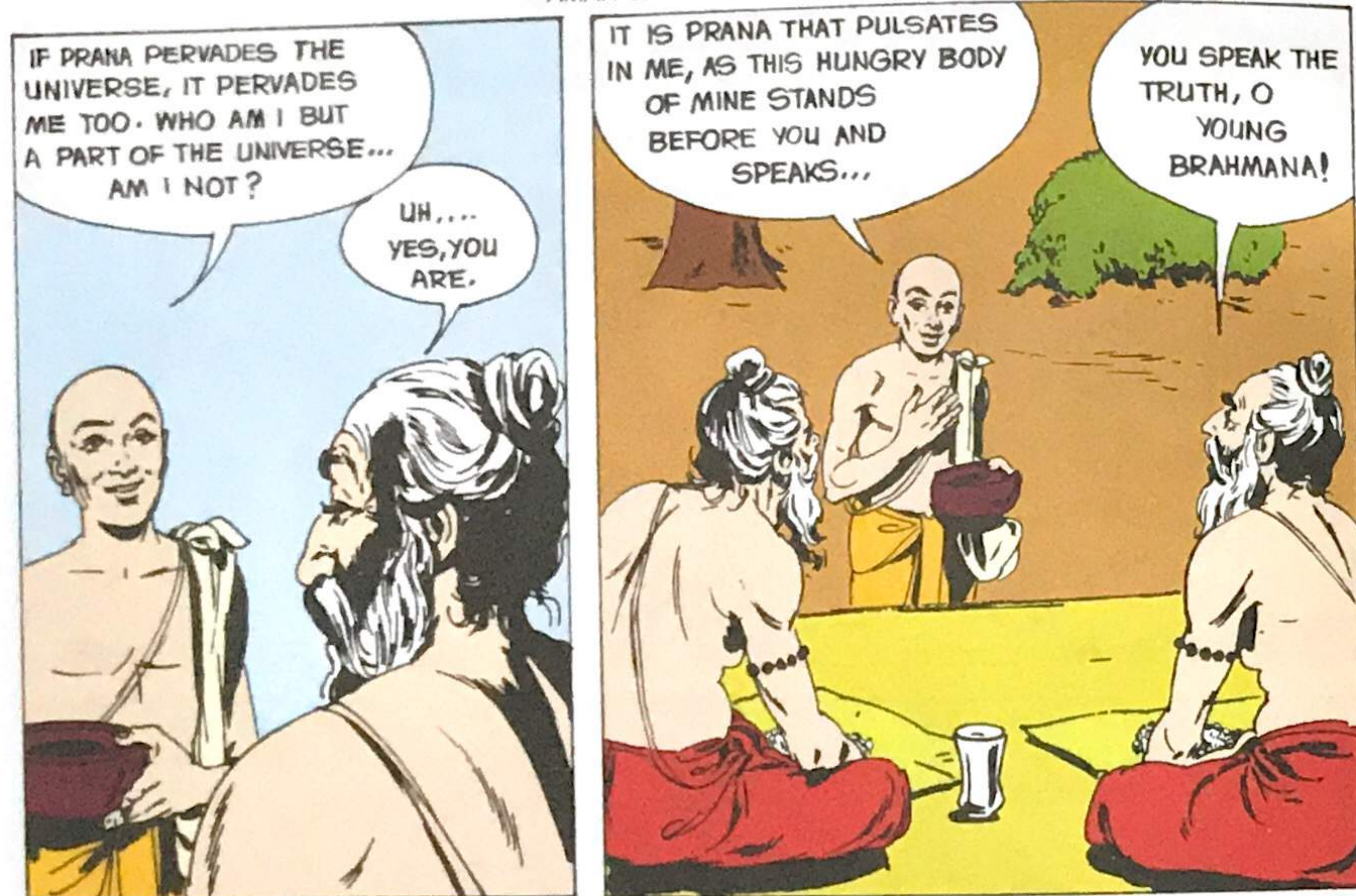


YES, YES... WE KNOW ALL THAT.

NOW, RESPECTED SIR, COULD YOU TELL ME TO WHOM DID YOU MAKE THIS FOOD-OFFERING?



PRANA, WHO ELSE?



AND THE SAGES, WHO SO FAR HAD ONLY UNDERSTOOD THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES, REALISED THEN THE SPIRIT BEHIND THE WORDS. ASHAMED AT THEIR IGNORANCE, THEY GLADLY SHARED THEIR FOOD WITH THE YOUNG BRAHMANA!

ONE TOON ONE STORY ONE-DERFULLY LONG... IT'S TINKLE TALL TALES!

TINKLE PRESENTS,
FOR THE FIRST
TIME EVER,
LONGER, LOONIER
ADVENTURES OF
YOUR FAVOURITE
TINKLE TOONS.
COMING YOUR WAY
THIS MAY!



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